魔法少女育成計画 restart（前）

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Magical Girl Raising Project

「著作権保護コン
魔法少女
育成計画
restart
後
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魔法少女育成計画
restart(前)
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魔法少女育成計画
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クランティル

半分だけいろんな
動物に変身できるよ

ペチカ

とても美味しい
料理を作れるよ

みよかたのなこ
御世方那子

どんな動物とも
友達になれるよ

リオネッタ

人形を思い通りに
操ることができるよ

プフレ

猛スピードで走る
魔法の車椅子を使うよ

のっこちゃん
まわりの人の気分を
変えられるよ
マジカルデイジー
必殺のデイジービームを
撃てるよ
あっとまーくにゃんにゃん
@娘々
お札の中にものを
閉じこめられるよ
ゆめのしまじぇのさいこ
夢ノ島ジェノサイ子
魔法のスーツで
どんな攻撃でもへいきだよ
マスクド・
ワンダー
いろんなものの重さを
変えられるよ
シャドウゲール
機械を改造して
パワーアップできるよ

チェルナー・マウス
ものすごく
大きくなれるよ
ディティック・
ベル
たてものと
お話しできるよ
ラピス・
ラズリーヌ
宝石を使って
テレポートできるよ
メルヴィル
色を自由に変えられるよ
アカネ
見えているものなら
なんでも斬れるよ
MAGICAL
GIRL'S

WHAT IS THE
MAGICAL GIRL RAISING PROJECT?

☆Intuitive for beginners, satisfying for advanced players!
★Magical Trace System allows you to feel like you're in real life when playing!
☆High quality graphics! It's on the level of real life!
★Millions of customizable items! Let your creativity shine!
☆Best of all, it's Free to Play for *life*!

Everyone is a Magical Girl! Welcome to the world of swords and sorcery!

Magical Girl Raising Project has been reborn as a Magical Girl-only Social Game!

Strengthen the bonds of friendship with the other Magical Girls. Defeat powerful enemies by teaming up together.

Strength and Kindness. Wisdom and Courage. Magical Girls possess these and more.

To survive in this world, you will need to be able to use your powers and your skills together! Proceed steadily, unlocking new areas that were sealed before, make progress within the game! Defeat the demon lurking within. Complete the game!

By the time everyone's finished with the game, you'll have trained to become a veteran Magical Girl! This is an RPG that is also an educational training simulator!

Team up with 5 people to defeat the Demon Lord.

The purpose of the game… To defeat the Demon Lord.

The reward… 1 Billion Yen. However, this will only be awarded to the players who defeated the Demon Lord.

Area clear reward… 1 Million Yen. However, this will only be awarded to players who unlock new areas.

Participation prize… 100,000 Yen. Wow! Even just playing the game gives you money!

Prologue

“Daisy! Over there, that warehouse!”

A small pink creature named Palette cried out. The creature was hanging on to a girl’s waist. It was pointing towards a warehouse.

The warehouse was an old one compared to the others. It was situated in a cluster of warehouses in the area.

The girl known as Magical Daisy ran. She ran extremely fast. Faster than normal humans could.

She jumped towards the wall of a building. As she landed, she jumped from the side of that wall to another building, and ran up the walls.

She jumped from building to building, doing inhuman stunts, almost like no one could.

Today, there was a drug trafficking operation on the outskirts of the city. The reports have placed the operation in one of the warehouses here.

Magical Daisy had received orders from the *Land of Magic*.

‘Raid the warehouse. Report back once the criminals are arrested’.

Magical Daisy pointed her finger at the direction of the warehouse. She did a pose, and then with a smile.

“Alright, let’s do this. *Daisyyy Beaaaaaam!*”

Magical Girls.

They are the forces that rose from the *Land of Magic*.

To ordinary humans, Magical Girls can be an oddity, even a superstitious occurrence.

Their physical abilities are far beyond any normal human's capabilities. It feels as if they transcend the laws of physics themselves.

Their abilities can be referred to as *Magic*.

Religious miracles, heretical sorcery, alchemy, Satanism, fairy tales, whatever you call them, they are magic.

They are abilities and powers that are similar to miracles.

The utopia that they all come from, the dreamland that produced all this is called the *Land of Magic*.

In more recent years, a revolutionary subculture has gained momentum in the human world, that has also spread to the *Land of Magic*.

Magical Girls.

Gentle, beautiful, sweet souls, who have a strong heart, never gives up, and always protects the innocent.

Many children wanted to become Magical Girls. Despite the name, being a Magical Girl isn't just limited to girls. Thus, both girls and boys would be able to become Magical Girls.

This was a good opportunity for the *Land of Magic* to train new Magical Girls.

Indeed, the *Land of Magic* easily created training programs to test potential candidates for Magical Girls.

Rarely are powerful Magical Girls created.

Not only that, there have been several incidents and accidents in the past. For example, recently there was an incident in a screening test where many Magical Girl candidates lost their lives.

For the safety of both humans and other Magical Girls, the details of the incident were covered up.

Leaders of the worlds had their minds wiped of the entire moment, and many information from that time had been altered or slightly changed from its actual happenings.

In the case of successful Magical Girls, many of their exploits would be disguised within the human world.

Anime and Manga. These were the most common methods of disguising the actions of the Magical Girls within the real world.

There are actually a lot of people from the *Land of Magic* that works within the entertainment industry. They are assigned there to work among humans to maintain the secrecy that is the Magical Girls.

One of the most popular Magical Girl anime that was aired not too long ago was called *Magical Daisy*.

In the show, Magical Daisy was a princess from the *Land of Flowers*. She had travelled to the human world to study, and was a Junior High School student. However, she had to keep her identity secret, otherwise she'd be deported back into the Land of Flowers.

The episodes of the anime were based on the real life Magical Daisy. An Actual Magical Girl.

Everything in the show was faked and altered of course, to protect the identity of the real Magical Daisy. However, the powers and actions of Magical Daisy in the anime were based on real things that Magical Daisy did.

When everything is said and done, it was a pretty faithful adaptation.

The alleyway smelled like beer.

It was late at night, and many bottles had been thrown about in the ground.

There was a man, mumbling to himself drunkenly. He must've been half-asleep and probably unconscious.

Magical Daisy searched through his pockets. She found his ID and home address.

Carrying him back home was pretty easy, considering he wasn't in any shape to actually refuse or fight back.

Daisy put him on the front porch, and rang the doorbell. She hid somewhere and waited.

A middle-aged woman opened the door.

"Honey? What are you doing out on the ground like that? What happened to you?"

She helped the man up and got him inside the house.

Mission completed.

That's one good deed for the day. Time to go home.

From her usual patrol area, it would take 15 minutes to head towards the station. She could also go to her college to take a ride home, but it's too late for that.

The train station was only a few minutes' walk from her apartment. It's not too long and can be reached easily enough, even if it's this late at night.

The apartment wasn't the best thing in the world. Shoddy and pretty unmaintained.
It was located in a quiet and peaceful residential area too, so at least there wouldn't be any trouble nearby.

Kiku Yakumo's room was upstairs. 1 small room. Before she entered her room, she had already transformed from her form of Magical Daisy to her normal human form.

The walls and ceilings were quite dirty. In fact, she's sure that if anyone ever decided to punch it, or even just accidentally fall on it, it would probably break.

What's more, there's no bath in the actual room, so she has to use the public bath upstairs.

The landlord was also very cranky, and has some kind of inferiority complex, so he was a pain to deal with.

The only advantage is the very cheap rent.

“I’m home!”

She said so with a somewhat tired voice. Pretty loud too.

She shouldn’t have said it, but it was a habit since she was young. The walls weren’t soundproof at all, so the neighbors would probably be able to hear her.

They probably think she’s a very lonely girl who talks to herself at night.

Well, she can’t exactly deny that she’s lonely.

She opened a plastic can of food. Then she moved her tote bag that she would use for college, and unfolded the futon on the floor.

She laid herself down on the futon. Bad idea. Futon was not as comfy as she thought. Ow.

Well, it didn’t matter. It was time to eat.

Welcome to the daily life of Magical Daisy. As a Magical Girl, she helped many people and fought crimes, but as Kiku Yakumo, it’s mostly no fun.

When she was in high school, there were practically no accidents in town. Because Daisy would always be there to save the day.

She would then go home, say goodbye to her friend Palette, and move on with her life until she was needed again.

Even now, she still sends e-mails with Palette, and often talk using her Magical Phone.

Kiku remembered the anime of herself, *Magical Daisy*. She still didn’t understand how that became a thing, or how the *Land of Magic* could actually be able to accomplish something like that.

Regardless, *Magical Daisy* was a hit. It was successful, and Kiku was happy.

It was extremely popular among her classmates, and just watching them talk about it like fans made her blush and giggle.

Magical Daisy was so popular, the anime got 3 seasons, then had an OVA release.

Kiku continued to work hard patrolling as Magical Daisy during that time.

She'd also go into forums discussing the show, as a fan and as someone who was curious as to how people thought of her, or at least her character in the anime.

Sometimes, she'd even check how many copies the anime sold in physical DVD sales.

Those were the days…

…Then she became a college student.

College work was harder than high school work, and required more of her time.

Kiku studied a lot harder to keep her grades up, and didn't have a lot of free time to do Magical Girl things. Because of that, she rarely became Magical Daisy.

While it's not exactly mandatory, it is expected for Magical Girls to actually do work.

Patrolling their territories, exterminating villains.

Those are things Magical Girls are just expected to do.

Kiku had already been estranged from her junior high and high school friends. She wasn't exactly keeping contact with them as well.

She didn't really have a life outside of her apartment and college.

Part time jobs mean she can't exactly become a Magical Girl that often anymore.

Still, even though she loved being a hero, she wanted to remember the old life she had when she was younger.

She had friends.

She wanted to go karaoke with her friends.

She wanted to bowling with them.

Who knows, maybe she might have been able to go on some romantic date back in junior high. Sounds cliché, but it was better than… whatever this life was.

It looked like it started to rain.

The sound of raindrops continued. As if the sounds themselves were insulting Kiku.

Her Magical Phone started to ring. Kiku sighed, she still hadn't changed the ringtone, though I guess it's because she kind of liked it.

The ringtone was the OP for *Magical Daisy*, titled '*Hello Daisy!*'. She must've set it during junior high and never changed it since.

A new message.

She wondered if it was from Palette, or maybe an emergency message from the *Land of Magic*.

She turned on the phone.

Then, she went over to the messages section.

"Huh?"

It wasn't from Palette or the *Land of Magic*. Also, the actual title was kind of… weird.

"Magical Girl… Raising Project?"

She had heard of it before. It was some kind of popular social game of some sort.

Was this an advertisement? Spam?

She tried to delete the message, but either her phone's busted or the screen's not responding to her fingers.

In fact, the message opened itself, and she began to read an explanation titled *What is the Magical Girl Raising Project*.

Well then. Let's begin the game, shall we?

A flash of colors appeared on the screen.

Kiku was caught off guard, looking at it with a puzzling expression.

Chapter 1:
Hello Daisy!

☆Pechika

In order to be a Magical Girl, an amount of stealth was required.

Most Magical Girls look human. They often just look like girls with rather exaggerated costumes, and can easily be mistaken for cosplay.

There are the rare cases where a Magical Girl doesn't look human at all, but that's a rare case.

The main idea is that a Magical Girl should try and keep their activities a secret from most humans, and preserve their identity.

But when the only observer is a small child… there could be an exception.

It was a hot Summer afternoon. The cicadas were buzzing along. The asphalt was hot, and the park was filled with children.

One of the girls in that park, about the age of a kindergartner, was holding onto a red balloon.

A gust of wind blew. The girl had removed her hold on the balloon, and it began to fly away.

Tears started rolling on the small girl's face.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a Magical Girl appeared. The Magical Girl jumped very high, and caught the balloon in the sky.

Tears of sadness turned to tears of joy.

"Thank you!"

The Magical Girl was wearing a very inconspicuous outfit. It was like a chef, with an apron and a white chef's hat.

The small girl smiled as she retrieved her balloon.

“Wow, Miss, you look very pretty!”

The Magical Girl looked slightly shocked, then she smiled and replied.

“Why thank you! But my name’s not Miss, it’s Pechika, okay?”

“Okay! Thank you very much, Pechika!”

“Now do me a favor and let’s keep this between us, okay?” said Pechika, while putting a finger to her mouth, as if shooshing the girl

The small girl nodded.

“Okay! Shh!”

Pechika smiled and nodded. Before this girl’s mother or something comes back, she rushed away, retreating to hide.

Pechika was a Magical Girl, so her speed was inhuman. She was fast enough not to be noticed by anyone at her full power.

With her speed, Chika Tatehara had escaped the daylight and was safely hidden again. She was a Magical Girl.

That was one of the first times that Chika had actually been called pretty.

While it wasn’t the only reason why she became a Magical Girl, Chika admitted that it was probably a big reason. Magical Girls were actually beautiful.

Chika had very low self-esteem about herself. She didn’t think that she had good social skills or even had an attractive appearance.

As a Magical Girl, that all changed. She felt a lot more confident under her alter ego than she did as Chika.

During junior high, Chika constantly tried to stay out of the spotlight as much as she could. She didn’t join any major clubs or even socialize a lot with people.

And then there was the boy she wanted to talk to.

Ninomiya-Kun.

He was an ace at baseball. Ever since she met him in. His whole life was baseball. She was pretty sure that all he did was eat, sleep, and baseball.

The baseball club at school always won games because of him. Now, he's already being looked at by talent scouts.

She was certain that he had a future as a professional league player.

Whenever she wanted to talk to him though, she would get flustered, since she never had any social skills to begin with.

She'd make excuses to meet him.

For example, she may want to borrow a book, or just to give him a towel after a hard day's practice. There were so many opportunities, but all of them were wasted.

After a game, Chika would come forward with her homemade cooking to give to Ninomiya-Kun.

He'd always accept it as a token of gratitude.

She would try to talk, but would just laugh nervously. She guessed it would look pretty weird.

The other girls would push her away when they want to meet with Ninomiya-Kun.

Chika didn't mind it.

After all, Chika was Chika.

Chika wasn't a model, she wasn't an idol, she wasn't a cheerleader.

Chika's appearance was… average at best.

Legs are a bit chubby. She wasn't too slender herself. Her fingers were thicker than most of the girls at school.

Nobody actually called her ugly, but nobody really would consider her beautiful as well.

Then she became a Magical Girl.

When she first transformed, she looked in the mirror and saw a beautiful pretty girl staring back.

That was Chika.

No, that was the Magical Girl, *Pechika*.

Chika had become Pechika and passed her selection test. She had become a true Magical Girl.

While Chika did enjoy and would want to help other people. What she really felt amazing about was her new figure.

She had a slenderer figure. Her face is what you would describe as a cute girl straight out of an anime. Her eyes were perfect, with blue pupils as well. Her fingers were soft and thin.

She was beautiful.

She had confidence.

She looked so cute!!!

She struck a pose, a cute one, then a cool one.

The outfit was a bit much, but it is part of the uniform, so she didn't mind it. Besides, it gave her an otherworldly kind of feel.

But that's not good for everyday life.

Chika transformed into Pechika and began to modify her dress. She took out any decorations that she could remove.

She even changed into a different dress entirely.

The uniform is fine for when she's doing Magical Girl stuff, but sometimes she just wants to be able to feel confidence in her daily life.

Everytime she wanted to help people, she would quietly sneak out of the house, so her parents wouldn't be suspicious.

It's been one year since Chika became a Magical Girl.

She started in 2nd grade middle school, now she was in her third year.

The constant day-to-day life of looking at a mirror for her beauty was over. She needed to act now if she wanted to talk to him.

Today is the day for action.

She prepared some delicious food for him, since that's actually her Magical Skill.

'*The ability to cook anything and make a delicious cuisine*'

She used that to her advantage.

Though the food seemed bland at first, with a little bit of the correct spices, it turned very delicious.

Not to mention, it's permanent.

The food was packed in a lunch box, with a gift wrap as well. This was going to be a special gift.

Chika stepped forward outside as Pechika.

To be honest, this didn't feel any different than going to school as normal, but she still felt just a tad bit nervous from all of this.

If Chika can impress Ninomiya-Kun… then…

…then…

What if the other girls become jealous…?

What if the other girls would hate her because Ninomiya-Kun liked her food?

What if Chika became an outcast… even more than usual?

Before this, she was quite an outcast, but it's because no one really paid attention to her. If Chika got the attention of Ninomiya-Kun, she might become a different kind of outcast. One that was hated by everyone.

Envy.

Jealousy.

What if Ninomiya-Kuns fans and teammates didn't want him spending time with her?

She can't focus on that now. She had to go meet him.

She travelled, watched him play, and waited for the baseball game to end.

The fans as usual clamored around to get to speak to their favorite players.

Chika, still looking like Pechika, calmly walked forward.

Every step that she took was like that of a thousand models. She felt confidence and she felt strength.

Ninomiya-Kun's fans were chatting with him.

Chika… not, not Chika. She's Pechika now.

Pechika put on a smile, and walked forward. She saw Ninomiya-Kun, and while holding on to the lunchbox, unable to look directly into his face. She said weakly.

"I-Um, I support you! Good luck! For your game, I mean!"

She was constantly looking down at the ground, towards his shoes.

Ninomiya-Kun didn't seem to hear her.

Maybe the fans' voices were too loud. Maybe Pechika wasn't loud enough.

Ninomiya-Kun walked along with his team, past Pechika. She looked up, and he was gone.

A wave of fans brushed past her, crowding her. He was gone, no longer there. Did Pechika miss her chance?

Pechika wasn't even noticed.

Pechika went home, avoiding her family when she got there. She transformed back into Chika again.

She threw herself onto her bed, screaming.

Rather than becoming a love maiden, she suffered as an ignored victim.

She covered her head with a pillow and screamed into it, venting out her failed chance to impress Ninomiya-Kun.

Her Magical Phone was ringing, but it didn't matter to her. She'll check it later.

Right now, she was busy being a loser.

Suddenly, what was once the soft fabric of her pillow changed to pebbles and rock.

Her soft bed suddenly became hard ground.

Chika coughed out the dirt that she accidentally swallowed in her mouth. She got up and was greeted by a blinding white light.

Sunlight. Very bright.

When her eyes adjusted, she realized she was no longer in her room.

That, and she seemed to have transformed into Pechika again.

Pechika stood up and tried to confirm what happened. The surroundings were very strange in nature.

Wilderness as far as the eye can see, with some buildings crumbled over in the distance.

"Where am I? What is this?"

This place was familiar yet unfamiliar at the same time.

Pechika thought for a minute on where she might be. The wilderness could easily be somewhere in Hokkaido, but the crumbling buildings means that it's not.

Crumbling buildings usually means someone fought there right? Or at least a big disaster happened?

She didn't think she was in Japan anymore.

Maybe she was in a country that had a disaster recently? A country that had a civil war inside of it? A country at war with another country?

So many different thoughts came up to her at once.

But wait, why was she transformed without her giving permission to. She just became Pechika when she got here.

Maybe this was punishment?

The *Land of Magic* might be punishing her because she used her Magical Girl powers for personal reasons instead of to help others.

But what kind of punishment is this supposed to be?

Then she remembered the ringing. Just a few seconds before she was transported here, her Magical Phone rang.

That's it!

She took it out of her pocket.

The Magical Phone works functionally similar to a regular smartphone, with the added features that Magical Girls can use.

The design was practical and can be strapped on to a belt for quick access, though the heart shaped screen was unpopular and made it difficult to read.

She opened her messages and sure enough there was a message.

Opening it up, she realized that her Magical Phone didn't seem to react to her fingers.

Pechika froze a bit. What's going on here.

The letters on her phone's screen displayed these words.

Tutorial Mode

All she could press was 'OK'.

Pechika nervously pressed 'OK', and the screen revealed another textbox.

Welcome to the Tutorial Mode of the Magical Girl Raising Project. Here, you will experience basic combat with a simple enemy. Defeat the enemy to earn Magical Candies!

What?

Tutorial Mode? Combat? Enemies? Magical Girl Raising Project? Magical Candies?

All these new terms at once. Pechika didn't understand any of it.

A large spatula appeared beside her. A weapon? Pechika picked it up, unsure of what to do with it.

Then, the ground began to shake. Earthquake? There was a hand that appeared from the ground. White, no skin, only bones.

It raised itself up, until Pechika could see its full body. Bones, skull, no teeth at all.

A skeleton.

More came, 5 of them, like the pictures you can see of the Grim Reaper, they were nothing but living skeletons that rose from the ground.

5 Skeletons have appeared!

Pechika wanted to scream in fear, but she couldn't move anything. She gritted her teeth and was scared out of her mind.

One of the skeletons grabbed her leg, and Pechika instinctively replied with a kick that sent most of the skeleton's torso flying.

However, its hand was still grabbing on to Pechika's leg.

Pechika felt its cold bony fingers latch on to her leg, and was frozen in fear.

Normally, Pechika would be able to just kick off any of the skeletons. This should be an easy fight for a Magical Girl.

However, Pechika's Magical Skill was something suited for cooking. She had never been, nor ever wanted to be, in an actual fight.

She couldn't rely on herself to defeat these skeletons.

The 4 skeletons remaining began to approach her slowly. Pechika couldn't move. She couldn't think.

However, before they reached her, they were suddenly cut in half from the torso.

Their bones fell all over the place, and they were no more.

"…Huh?"

Did panic unleash her inner powers? That was unlikely. Pechika didn't feel anything from her body causing this.

She looked down at her feet. The skeleton hand wasn't grabbing her anymore.

All the skeletons were neatly cut into 3 horizontal lines.

Pechika looked around. At times like these, she was glad to have the vision of a Magical Girl. They have extremely sharp eyesight.

In the distance, approximately 2 kilometers away, was the figure of a girl.

Pechika couldn't see a lot of details from that distance.

The distant girl ran. She was fast. She covered 2 kilometers in only a few seconds. She ran and stopped in front of Pechika.

That girl was wearing a traditional Samurai robe, with some armor pads in the shoulders.

Her hair had a long ponytail in the back, with a flower decorated at the end of it.

She had brown hair, and was carrying a long Katana.

This was a Magical Girl outfit. Could it be that her Magical Skill lets her fight with her sword from as far as 2 kilometers away?

“Thank you very much!”

Pechika said while bowing to the girl.

The girl didn’t react.

“Um, my name is Pechika. I’m… I’m also a Magical Girl. You are too, right?”

No reaction. However, the girl was intently staring at Pechika.

“Er… This place, do you know where we are? Were you taken here too? I was suddenly taken here, and then all these skeletons showed up, and I panicked and… well, you saved me”

The girl in front of Pechika looked around.

Then, she looked at Pechika, and finally replied,

“To not act when the situation calls for it… That can be a bad decision”

“Huh?”

“That is most unwise. That is… not good”

The girl stretched out her left arm towards Pechika, and she clutched Pechika’s throat.

Pechika couldn’t move.

The girl lifted Pechika with one hand.

She tightened the grip on Pechika’s throat. Pechika could feel the hands gripping it. She began to make choking noises, being unable to breathe.

The girl spoke,

“My battle is not yet over”

Her right hand gripped her Katana, and she moved it closer to Pechika’s neck.

Pechika felt the power of the girl’s choking grasp increase.

The girl spoke again,

“I am looking for a Musician…”

“I… I don’t know… I, ack, I… I just got here… Please”

The swordsman girl slowly released her grip on Pechika. She lowered her sword, and let Pechika’s throat go.

Pechika fell down, breathing hard. Exhausted.

The girl spoke,

“You are not the Musician. You are not who I seek…”

The girl turned her back on Pechika and began to walk away. Pechika saw the girl walk away, her Katana trailing the ground, making marks where it cut.

She decided not to follow the swordsman girl.

There are more important things to think about now.

For example, where is she?

Why did she arrive here?

Are there more Magical Girls around?

☆Magical Daisy

The skeleton was surprisingly extremely brittle.

Either Daisy severely overestimated the strength of the human bone, or Daisy severely underestimated her strength against them.

There’s no way Daisy would lose to these things anyway.

As a veteran Magical Girl, that would probably disgust her more than anything, not to mention it will actually be a shameful display.

“Daisy punch!”

It’s just a regular punch.

“Daisy kick!”

It’s just a regular kick.

Magical Daisy didn’t really have any special ability involving punches and kicks. Aside from the fact that they’re strengthened by her Magical Girl body, they’re just regular punches and kicks.

However, Daisy did feel like if she shouted and gave it names, it’ll be more powerful.

She called them *Tricks*. The most powerful trick…

“Daisy Beam!”

This was not a regular beam. This was Magical Daisy’s *Magical Skill*. A deathblow beam.

Not a deathblow in the metaphysical sense.

This is literally an *insta-kill beam*.

In addition to a Magical Girl’s increased physical abilities, each Magical Girl is also gifted with one unique Magical Skill.

It only makes sense, since they’re *Magical* Girls.

Daisy’s Magical Skill is her Daisy Beam.

If she so simply wished, by pointing her finger at a target, a beam with a diameter of 10 centimeters is launched from the tip of her finger.

The beam itself decomposes her target instantly. Magical Daisy didn’t exactly know how it works, though.

According to Palette, it is a beam that splits its target apart on a molecular level. Thus, when the beam hits something, the object becomes smooth and sand-like.

There is also a variation.

If Magical Daisy would spread her palm out instead, then the beam would become 50 centimeters in diameter.

Thus, the attack range is increased dramatically.

The *Land of Magic* suggested it to only be used to remove obstacles, or to get rid of unwanted industrial and nuclear waste in the world.

But in cases like this, a deathblow beam would be nice.

The skeletons all disappeared into the wind and dust. However, Magical Daisy didn't exactly feel right.

She felt a bit guilty.

This is the first time she'd ever used her Daisy Beam on something that could be considered an actual being.

They probably weren't alive, but still…

Palette always told her not to use it for murder. Does that even count as murder?

All she remembered was that on that night, she was in her apartment, and read a message that said the game has begun.

Then, she transformed into a Magical Girl and was brought to this place.

"What is this place? Where am I?"

She began to monologue to herself.

The wilderness was all around her, and there are some crumbling buildings in the distance too.

Not to mention the scorching sunlight. Is she going to get sunburn from this?

The heat was unbearable. She's never been to these countries, but could it be that she's in Mexico or Africa?

She tried to use her Magical Phone, but none of its usual functions were working.

Instead, she found more text from the phone from whoever was probably behind all this.

Congratulations! You have defeated 5 Skeletons! The tutorial is now complete.

You have received 5 Magical Candies!

Magical Candies?

Daisy remembered hearing something about that before, just before the skeletons showed up.

Please make your way towards town

Town? What town? The only place remotely considered a town here would be the crumbling buildings.

Everywhere else is just nothing but wilderness.

Perhaps if there was a vantage point that Daisy could look through. A tall point where she would be able to see everything.

One of the buildings might work.

Magical Daisy ran into the ruins of the crumbling buildings.

Most of them have lost their color. They were brown and dirty with dust, and hardly very sturdy.

Most of them were cracked, and the slightest nudge would probably break some of the supports that were rusted.

There was a good enough building to climb through. A bit slanted, but it's the tallest one available.

Magical Daisy entered the slanted building.

The floors were about to break.

She ascended the ruined building carefully. Jumping up the floors, and running up the walls that could support her.

Something like this is easy for someone with the abilities of a Magical Girl.

Once she reached the top, she began to scan the area surrounding her, and far more.

The wind up here is much harsher than below.

The sunlight was also much stronger. Magical Daisy placed her hand in her forehead, blocking the scorching heat.

With her enhanced vision, she could see a lot from this vantage point. What she saw in the farthest distance was a cluster of buildings clumped together.

That could be the town.

She looked around in front, nearby, and behind her.

Wilderness. Nothing but empty wilderness and crumbling buildings.

But then her vision stopped on a distant figure. The figure was carrying some kind of long rod, or stick, or… something.

For some reason, Magical Daisy sensed danger, and immediately she jumped.

The floor around Daisy began to crack, and it was as if the building itself was sliced in half, at least the top part.

Another slice nearby, another.

This figure's weapon shined within the sunlight.

Metal. A sword?

Magical Daisy extended her palms towards the figure. However, she hesitated.

What if that figure is alive? What if it was a human?

She was fine with the skeletons, but a living being might die from the Daisy Beam. She didn't want to kill anyone.

But maybe she didn't have to.

Daisy pointed her hand lower, towards the building where the figure was standing.

She fired a beam, and the building where the figure was began to crumble. At the same time, the figure swung their weapon, and the building where Daisy is was being sliced apart.

Daisy fired another shot, and dodged another swing.

There doesn't seem to be a time lag between the figure's swing and the slashes. It's as if they're actually here.

However, if Daisy can telegraph the movements, she could easily avoid it.

Daisy fired one more, and the building fell.

The figure jumped off, and whilst doing that, slashed horizontally, causing the building that she was standing on to collapse as well.

Daisy jumped off. There was a considerable bit of distance between her and the figure, but if she was correct, then the figure might be able to close that gap quite easily.

"Daisy Beam! Daisy Beam! Daisy BEEEAAAM!"

She didn't aim for the figure, but she aimed for the ground in front of her. She wanted to create smoke clouds to obscure the vision of whoever is slicing her.

One slash.

Two slashes.

The buildings behind her and the ground are getting slashed apart. Daisy saw her opponent get in closer.

Daisy rammed herself into the dust cloud, trying to hide herself within it.

She saw a thick black figure closing in. Her opponent isn't even trying to hide herself.

Daisy was blown back by a kick. She fell over towards the ground, and immediately changed her stance to that of crawling.

She aimed at her opponent's foot, and rolled forward to kick it, but her opponent withdrew backwards.

Daisy, still prone on the ground, received a low kick from her opponent that hit her forehead. The force threw her back, sending her flying. Her lower jaw took the brunt of the landing.

Daisy felt numbness throughout her body.

She just barely saw the sword aimed for her throat.

Daisy dodged it and got back up on her feet. She had some distance away, as her opponent controlled theirs with her Katana.

Her opponent pointed her sword at her, ensuring Daisy doesn't get too close.

Daisy squatted, and lunged at her opponent. She launched a sweep with her foot, throwing her opponent off balance as her opponent fell to the ground.

The opponent's sword rolled away, and she was sprawled momentarily at the ground.

Daisy leapt forward, but the opponent rolled back. Fist to fist, hand to hand combat. With the speed of her opponent, Daisy could tell that this was a Magical Girl.

Magical Daisy was also the same. She also had a body that withstood physical pain like her opponent did.

Finally, in the fight, Daisy managed to grab her opponent's sleeves, and managed to throw her quite far.

"Ha ha!"

Magical Daisy couldn't help but let out a laugh.

A bad decision as a fist soon hit her, followed by an elbow, and a kick to her knee.

The combo attack would've ended with a kick to the neck, had Daisy not blocked it with her arm.

Daisy took a huge leap backwards and brushed her feet of the dust.

She was ready for another round.

She charged forward again and…

…Nobody was there.

“Huh…?”

Her body felt hot. The sun is back.

The cloud of dust that they fought on was gone.

Wind blew on the ground.

Only Magical Daisy was standing there.

Did her opponent escape?

Perhaps she didn’t enjoy their fight.

For Magical Daisy, fighting hand-to-hand in zero visibility, with a cloud of smoke, unsure of what would happen next.

That was exciting. She had thought her opponent felt the same.

“You are not the Musician”

Magical Daisy heard a voice from somewhere.

She looked around, but no one was there. Was it her opponent’s voice?

She wasn’t 100% sure, but she was highly certain that her opponent was another Magical Girl, just like her.

But she can’t focus on that now.

Her body was tired. She was sweating. It was hot outside. The fact that she had a fight didn’t help either, as it only made her feel even more heat.

She tried her best to cool her body down, but then she recalled her original purpose.
The town.

There’s a dust cloud forming in the distance, and what looked like figures surrounding someone.
White figures.

Skeletons!

So there *are* others just like her. Daisy thought this would be a good time to help out.

She aimed the palm of her right hand. She was ready to use the larger version of her Daisy Beam.

Then she lowered it.

At this distance, she's not going to be able to aim properly. Not only that, she might accidentally hit the person she's trying to help.

"Ah, dammit!" she yelled out to herself as she ran towards the skeletons.

☆Pechika

Most of the buildings that Pechika entered were completely hollow. Not any sign of furniture or anything inside of it.

Some of them looked like they were apartment buildings formerly. Others also looked like they were used as businesses or offices.

But most of them were just empty shells, with no traces of anyone living there.

The wind blew hard.

The windows inside the buildings were cracked or weren't even there at all.

Pechika was trying to look for some clues on where she was, but she had begun to give up.

She dusted off the floor, and sat down, leaning on a wall. She sighed.

She was attacked by a monster.

She was nearly killed by another Magical Girl.

Her Magical Phone wasn't working.

No texts or e-mails or anything could be sent.

She couldn't even make any calls.

And now her phone is displaying a term she doesn't even understand.

You have 0 Magical Candies

Magical Candies? That sounds vaguely like something a Magical Girl would have, but she had never heard of it before.

Pechika was just scared.

She knows that her mind isn't as strong as most people's. She knows she's not the most mentally prepared Magical Girl.

She thought of Ninomiya-Kun. An escape from this reality.

Actually, Pechika had no idea if this was supposed to be reality.

She remembered cooking food for Ninomiya-Kun. Food especially made using her own Magical Skill.

It's supposed to always be delicious, but maybe he wouldn't have liked it.

She wouldn't know now.

Pechika should stop thinking about that. It's useless to do so. Thoughts about Ninomiya-Kun would only make her sadder.

It's not like she can help it, either. Whenever she was sad, she'd often think of the fun times she had, so instinctively, she thought of whatever used to make her happy.

But now it just made her sadder.

Pechika cried silently.

Tears rolled down her cheek, but she made no sound. She was afraid that if she made any sound, she'd be discovered and attacked again.

Pechika couldn't believe she was crying. Usually, she only cried when she was in her human form. She never cried as Pechika before.

Her crying was interrupted by what felt like another earthquake. Except, like before, it's not.

Pechika heard the sound of footsteps, and…

…hooves?

Her eyes looked around for any people in her room. There was none. However, the sounds came from inside the building. Someone was there with her.

Pechika heard talking through one of the walls.

She put her ear on them.

More than one person. More than two people. There's 3 talking.

Their footsteps have stopped. Maybe Pechika could talk to them. Maybe they could help her. Maybe they're decent people.

Or maybe they might attack her. Either is a possibility.

Pechika weighed the risks.

There's a chance of meeting good and bad people here.

If they're willing to talk, Pechika will talk. If they're not willing to talk, Pechika will just have to run.

She followed the source of the sound, sneaking ahead, trying to not make any noise.

She found a door that seemed to lead to the room where the people were talking. Pechika nervously opened the door.

"Many times I tell you, I am not arguing!" said someone from inside the room.

Pechika understood them, so at least they're not foreign… maybe.

Although, the grammar was a bit off, at least Pechika could still understand her.

“Okay, look. Why don’t we just climb this building first? We’ll be able to survey the area after that. Leonetta, you can do that, right?”

“I can certainly do it better than *her*”

“I am very much capable! Please to not make accusations!”

“Will you two *stop fighting*!?”

“I am not to fighting! I am simply speaking my thoughts! Please to understand!”

Pechika didn’t know if she should interrupt or not. However, she did take a look at the individuals.

There were indeed 3 people involved.

The one with the funny grammar is dressed in some sort of shaman outfit. All white. She had long hair, and looked a little foreign. Probably why she had a strange grammar.

“She’s right, y’know? We’re not fighting. Fighting implies we’re on the same level, heh”

That girl was a little bit smaller than the rest. She had a blue-ish dress on. A bonnet and bloomers. Pechika would describe her fashion sense as being like a Lolita.

Her face would be something you could describe as cute, however there was something off about it.

She had human looking skin, but a wooden looking texture.

Then Pechika saw her wrists and joints of her fingers. They were connected spherically, as if she was some kind of…

…doll.

In fact, upon closer inspection, the girl clearly looked like a life-sized puppet, with uncannily perfect human features.

The third person, taller than the rest, looked to be the leader of the group.

Her dress had tail feathers at the end of it, and she had lots of decorations on it. A large ribbon, and what looked like small antlers that grew on her head.

What's strange is that there looks to be… under her dress… a horse?

Wait, that's not right.

It's more like her lower body is a horse. The horse legs and body came out from under her skirt. However, somewhere along the way, the upper half was that of a human girl.

Was she some kind of centaur?

These strange looking girls. Pechika couldn't tell if they were supposed to be Magical Girls or just more monsters that the game conjured up.

Slowly, Pechika backed away. Not a few seconds after she did that, her Magical Phone suddenly rang. The startled Pechika ran away, dropping her hat.

The 3 other people took out their Magical Phones, as it started ringing as well. Then, they looked towards the entrance, and saw Pechika's hat.

Pechika herself was long gone.

☆Magical Daisy

Magical Daisy had just rescued a maid. Or at least, a girl in a maid outfit. The girl identified herself as *Nokko-Chan*.

She had a typical black and white maid outfit.

There were silver ribbons in her hair, tying up her twin-tails, which were also braided. She was carrying around a mop, which was also tied with an even bigger version of her ribbons.

She had blonde hair.

Her appearance was very young. It reminded Magical Daisy of what she looked like almost 10 years ago.

This girl, Nokko-Chan, is a Magical Girl. From what she told Daisy, she was apparently a Magical Girl since the age of 4.

Which explains the childlike name.

She told Daisy that she petitioned the *Land of Magic* to change her name about 13 times. All of them rejected.

According to the *Land of Magic*, once you've chosen your Magical Girl name, it's permanent, just like a Magical Girl's choice of outfit. Unless it's an extreme life-or-death situation.

Not even names come up by 4-year olds are an exception.

Still, this poor girl, probably in elementary now, is brought here just like Daisy was, so Daisy extended a hand in friendship.

"Do you know why you were brought here?" asked Daisy with a smile.

"No. I don't know. It was the middle of the night, and I was looking at my phone, then suddenly I'm here."

Magical Daisy asked Nokko-Chan if she remembered the date and time. Vaguely, Nokko-Chan replied as best as she could.

Give or take an hour or two maybe, the dates match. Daisy could only assume the hours must have matched as well.

So she wasn't just another Magical Girl, this was planned out.

"Um… Excuse me," asked Nokko-Chan

"Yes?"

"Are… Are you really Magical Daisy? *The* Magical Daisy?"

"Er… Well, yes, I am, but…"

"Oh my gosh! That's so *cool*! I… I watch you every day on TV! I saw your Anime! Did you actually *do* those things on TV?"

"Ehehe… Ah, well… The Anime kind of exaggerates a bit, but I guess?"

Nokko-Chan was a huge fan of Magical Daisy.

She was a huge fan of Magical Girls in general, but especially Magical Daisy.

Nokko-Chan apparently has a collection of Magical Girl Anime and Manga that she reads every day in her room.

In a way, Magical Daisy was just like her.

Like Nokko-Chan, Daisy also was a huge fan of Magical Girls when she was younger.

While this is quite unusual, it's nice to actually meet a fan who watches *Magical Daisy*.

"Remember that one episode, where you fought a huge monster? That was so scary! Were you scared too?"

Nokko-Chan talked about episodes of the Anime.

Daisy remembered things from back then.

The episode where she fought a scary monster was an exaggeration of her taking out a drug ring.

The episode where Daisy was emotionally broken was actually based on a sad part of her life, but it wasn't that extreme.

"Oh my gosh, I was so nervous when I saw it, I couldn't wait for next week!"

Nokko-Chan continued to talk from the bottom of her heart.

A little embarrassed, Magical Daisy didn't really know what to say. She felt like she was some kind of idol being interviewed by a fan. Though, considering her show is already finished, it's more like a retired idol.

Daisy had decided.

She will protect Nokko-Chan. She'll be her guardian, wherever this is.

"Y'know, Nokko-Chan. A lot of those episodes came from when I was in middle school!"

"Really!? That's so *cool*!"

They continued to converse, but were interrupted by the sound of their Magical Phones ringing.

Daisy took out her phone, and saw the message in the screen.

Please make your way to the Town at once. Thank you!

Nokko-Chan looked confused, but Daisy explained the cluster of buildings that she believed was the town that the phone is talking about.

"Why don't you tag along with me?" asked Daisy.

Nokko-Chan's cheeks turned red, and she nodded bashfully.

"O-Okay! I'm not a fast runner, but I'll do my best to keep up!"

That's not exactly a true fact. With a Magical Girl's body, you should be able to easily outrun humans.

The distance to the nearest town is about 20 kilometers. It should be nothing for a Magical Girl.

But it looks like Nokko-Chan is just not confident in her physical ability. Not to mention the fact that she got surrounded by the skeletons, too.

Although she might slow down Daisy, Daisy didn't mind. Protecting the girl was more important than anything right now.

Daisy ran slowly enough that Nokko-Chan can keep up, and they both ran straight towards the general direction of the Town.

The 'Town' itself is a town in name only. It's still rather run-down and abandoned, and aside from being the center of the post-apocalyptic landscape, it's not really much of a town.

Still, even though it's run-down, the buildings were in much better condition than the ones on the outskirts. Not like that's saying much.

With Nokko-Chan right beside her, Daisy entered the town.

In the center of the town was a square field.

There was some sort of fountain in the center. A mermaid statue was decorating the center of the fountain. However, all the water had dried up, and there was really nothing coming out of the fountain at all.

Most of the center was just filled with sand.

At the center of the town, Daisy could see a girl.

"Wa-wa-wa-wait!!! Hold up!"

A noise sounded from one of the girls.

Daisy walked over to her, Nokko-Chan behind her.

"Ah! Are you… Are you the *real* Magical Daisy!?"

"Uh… yeah, I guess I'm pretty real, hehe"

"That's so *awesome*! You mean, you're *the* Magical Daisy!? Oh my god!!!"

The girl was wearing a sort of spandex-like superhero suit.

She had something to cover her head as well, and it looked like there were orange goggles, large ones, on her head.

Not only that, on her holster was a gun. Not a normal gun. It looked like a toy raygun. Something that came out of a sci-fi B-movie.

“Haa…! I knew it! My otaku senses never failed me yet! I… have… *all* the Magical Daisy merch! I’ve got your figurines, and I have the complete DVD set! I still watch re-runs, y’know?”

Wow, this girl really is a huge geek. Daisy didn’t think it was a bad thing. In fact, she was kind of flattered.

All this brought back memories for Daisy again.

It’s so nice to meet fans.

“Nyan Nyan! Nyan Nyan! Come here!”

Oh…

…So she wasn’t just screaming ‘nyan’. That was actually a name.

The girl that came over had a very Chinese-like dress, along with hair buns. She looked like a China Doll.

She had a vermillion colored dress, with an air of elegance to her.

However… sticking out from behind her was…

…Some kind of lizard’s tail. A gigantic one at that.

“Geno? Who’s this? Someone you know, Ru?”

“Wha- Seriously!? You’re asking me *that*? This is… This is *Magical Daisy*!!! She’s practically famous!”

“Ah, a famous person? I apologize. I must’ve been rude, Ru”

“Come ‘on, Nyan Nyan… You’re embarrassing me!”

The China Doll looking girl introduced herself as @NyanNyan.

Meanwhile, the sci-fi B-Movie looking girl introduced herself as Yumenoshima Genopsycho.

“Oooh, those are super cool names!” said Nokko-Chan brightly.

The two girls smiled as if they were being praised by a critic.

“Right? You gotta have a cool name if you want to stand out, Ru!”

“You gotta make an *impactful* first impression, right?”

The two girls laughed. They clearly were enjoying themselves.

“Say, what’s your name? You haven’t told us yet”

“Huh? Oh… me? I’m… Nokko-Chan”

Nokko-Chan hung her head down, clearly embarrassed by the childish sounding name she had.

“Well, that’s a cute name!”

“O-oh… thanks”

After a while, the girls sat around in a circle, with Nokko-Chan sitting in the fountain. They talked about their experiences before they were brought here.

It looked like Nyan Nyan and Genopsycho never knew each other, and met in this place. Which means that Daisy and Nokko-Chan were lucky to have encountered them.

Not only that, but they both ended up here the exact same way Daisy did.

They were looking at their phones during midnight because a text message appeared, then they were brought to this place, then they were attacked by skeletons.

By the looks of it, these two girls managed to handle themselves just fine against the skeletons.

“Ah, we also met other Magical Girls, Ru”

“There were other Magical Girls before us”

Daisy raised her eyebrow. She knew there were others, but she wondered if they were talking about that swordswoman.

“What do you mean? Where are they, now?” asked Daisy.

“They left. They said they had some errands to complete. They were in a big rush, too, Ru.”

“But they never told us what the errands were. Rude. Seriously, they were a buncha’ rude Magical Girls”

Based on the appearances described by the two girls, it looks like there were at least 3 Magical Girls.

One was a Magical Girl that looked like a doll or something. Daisy didn’t really quite understand.

One was a Magical Girl wearing a shrine priestess outfit.

One was a Magical Girl with the lower body of a horse.

“And… you guys just let them be?”

“Well, they weren’t exactly doing anything wrong, Ru”

For some reason, even though Daisy didn’t know their identities, she was really worried about those other Magical Girls. Thinking about them made her feel uneasy.

“Plus, they probably have the same reason of being here as we are,” chimed Genopsycho.

She continued on,

“We still don’t know what we’re supposed to be doin’ here. I’ve got a couple of guesses though, and- huh?”

Just then, their Magical Phones began to ring.

Another text message?

Genopsycho excitedly took out her Magical Phone.

“Ah *yeah*! Alright, a new message! You guys, turn on your phones right now!”

The screen, which once said something along the lines of ‘Please proceed to the town’ had changed.

Support Button has been added!

“Support button?” asked Magical Daisy with confusion.

She checked her own phone, and sure enough, there was a large *Support* button on the screen. Hesitantly, Magical Daisy tapped the button.

Master’s Side
Part 1

The classroom was in flames. It was a burning raging fire that engulfed the entire room, and probably even the building.

The desks and chairs, which were made of wood, were easily burned in the inferno.

The scenery was red. This was hell on earth.

In the middle of the classroom stood two Magical Girls.

One was a red haired girl, with a red dress, red pupils, and a fiery passionate face. She smiled, a bestial smile, her body at home in the flames.

The other one was a platinum blonde haired girl, with a white dress. A sailor dress, like the one worn in schools.

She had frills and flower-like decorations on her skirt.

Her expression was that of calmness. On her right hand, was a weapon. A large halberd, with a long blade on one end.

Red vs. White.

The red girl made the first move. She crouched, and leapt forward in the direction of the white Magical Girl.

However, it was as if the white Magical Girl knew about the attack before it would happen.

Easily, she parried the incoming kick with the shaft of her halberd.

The red girl was not easily deterred.

The 2nd strike, dodged.

The 3rd was blocked by the white Magical Girl's arms.

When the 4th strike came from the red girl, the white girl twirled her halberd and managed to inflict a wound on the red girl's legs.

The red girl screamed in pain, and the white girl kicked the red girl away, the force of it lengthened the distance between the two.

Blood leaked out of the scar in the red girl's leg, and with a growl, she jumped back into the flames, her body seemingly disappearing within it.

The white Magical Girl twirled her halberd at the ready, looking around the surroundings.

Then, from behind her, the red girl seemed to materialize from the flames, ready to pounce the white Magical Girl.

However, just like before, it was as if the white girl knew what was going to happen before it happened.

She ducked, and the red girl was off her mark. Her kick, aimed for the white girl, instead went over her, and she was sent flying far away.

The white girl took this chance.

She reached inside a bag that was strapped onto her, and pulled out a fire extinguisher.

She unpinned it, and sprayed the entire room. Within seconds, the raging inferno had ceased.

The white Magical Girl walked over towards the red Magical Girl, still dazed from the missed attack.

The red girl looked up at the white girl with disbelief.

The white Magical Girl raised the fire extinguisher, and swung it down on the red girl's head.

Clang!

A swift hit, and the red girl fell down, not moving.

The white Magical Girl threw away the fire extinguisher. Her expression hadn't changed at all since before the battle.

The video ends there.

A PC screen. A frozen image of the classroom with the white and red Magical Girls.

The sound of mouse clicks, and the pointer pausing the video.

The room was dark, and the PC was the only light source available. A girl was watching the footage.

"Hahaha! Amazing! Truly amazing! Look at those skills, look at those moves!"

The girl rewinded the video to the point where the white Magical Girl dodged the kick from behind.

"Look at that. Effortless! Once again, the villain is defeated! Even though Flame Flamey has exceptional combat skills, she couldn't defeat Snow White!"

She closed the video, and stretched her arms.

"My, my… How amazing you are, Snow White! Truly deserving of the title *Magical Girl Hunter*!"

"She *is* quite strong, isn't she, Pon?"

The voice of the girl was interrupted by a synthetic, high pitched voice. It came from inside the girl's phone.

"Not *just* strong. Caring, helpful, fights for justice! The *ideal* Magical Girl! She will never let evil live!"

The girl became giddy with laughter.

"She stops villains and is a hero to all! Senseless killing, murder… Those are unacceptable!"

The girl paused a bit, and pondered.

"My mentor was right, in a way. Always let the strongest prevail, only then you will have an efficient and effective Magical Girl. Snow White proved to be just that"

"What are you going to do, Pon?"

Her enthusiasm reached its highest point. The girl smiled.

"Well, I think it's quite simple… I'm going to help Snow White!"

Chapter 2:
Bon Appetit

☆ Magical Daisy
Loud fanfare sounded from their Magical Phones. A bright light shone, which caused Genopsycho to drop her phone.

Materializing from the phone is a strange creature.

It is soft, small, round-ish in shape.

On the creature's left side, it is all white. The creature's right side is all black

It had wings, and it appeared to be flying. Sprinkles and sparkling things would occasionally fall out of it as it moved around.

What's more, it seemed see-through, yet not really. Some kind of stereoscopic projection?

"Why, good evening there, Magical Girls! I am the mascot of the *Magical Girl Raising Project*! You can call me Fal! Nice to meet you, Pon!"

Genopsycho looked at the creature. @NyanNyan also looked at it. Nokko-Chan also looked at it.

Magical Daisy asked a question to the stereoscopic creature.

"Wait. Okay, where is this? Where are we? What's going on?"

The creature named Fal twirled happily and answered.

"You are in the *Magical Girl Raising Project*! A new generation of social games! Virtual Reality!"

Did she hear that right?

"T-This place is virtual?"

"Thaaaat's right, Pon! Experience that you've gathered here will be accumulated to you in real life! You've all been selected using a very strict lottery system! I guess you could say you're lucky, Pon!"

Genopsycho chimed in,

"H-huh!? What do you mean this place is virtual? I don't remember ever signing up for anything like that!"

"Not to worry, Pon! The Magical Trace system has made it easy to transport you into this virtual reality! Look at the graphics, Pon! I bet no game in the world has graphics as real as these, right?"

Magical Daisy tried to make sense of the situation.

If this was virtual reality, then everything shouldn't feel real. However, the dust, the buildings, the wounds she got from fighting earlier, the scorching hot sun. They all *felt* real.

But now that she thought about it. Skeletons rising from the ground. That's way too much for reality.

"What about our Magical Skills? How are they affected?"

Daisy asked the question, even though she was sure her Daisy Beam still worked.

"Don't worry about that! The Magical Trace system brought every single part of you here! That means any magic you had will still work, Pon!"

"Hey… listen here you, you can't just randomly bring us here without their permission! That's just… *irresponsible*!"

Genopsycho walked over towards Fal and tried to grasp him. Unfortunately, since it appears that Fal was just a stereoscopic projection, her hand just went through him.

Frustrated, Genopsycho screamed out.

Nokko-Chan also looked distraught.

It makes sense. They were taken away suddenly, had to fight skeletons, were commanded to come to this town.

They had all the right to complain.

"Hey, hey! Calm down! Hear me out, Pon!"

The self-proclaimed mascot character continued to talk as if nothing happened. His expression hasn't changed at all.

This mascot character was different from Magical Daisy's old mascot character, Palette. He was expressive, and this one was just… off.

"While you're here, time is compressed in the real world! You guys will all be back the same time you left! Don't worry about it, Pon! So let's keep this game going for about… hmm… 3 days would be good, Pon!"

The creature flew over to each of the girls.

"Also, all of you can *still* use your Magical Skill here, so it's no problem, Pon! Since there's no save point, there's a resurrection spell in case the worst happens, Pon! Rest assured, you are *all* safe!"

“So, why didn’t the *Land of Magic* tell us about all this earlier?” asked Daisy

“You know how unreasonable the *Land of Magic* is, Pon! You were all chosen to be Magical Girls without them telling you too! It’s the same here, Pon! Besides, this is… let’s call this… a Beta testing period! But don’t worry, this is an officially sanctioned test, Pon!”
Somehow, Daisy still felt suspicious.

“The prizes are also worth it, Pon! Money! You even get it just for participation, Pon! You’ll also be able to earn a lot more if you clear the game, Pon! There’s just one condition. Like a Magical Girl’s identity, this game is a secret to everyone but the players, okay? Shh!”

Genopsycho, @NyanNyan, and Nokko-Chan all looked towards Daisy. It seemed they had all gravitated to her leadership.

“Well… are you ready, Pon? The other players have started. It’s best you catch up, Pon!”

Seeing Nokko-Chan made Daisy feel the need to protect her. If anything, she’ll at least get the girl back home.

At the very least, that’s what she’ll do.

☆ Pechika
Pechika had decided to participate in this game. The game that she still has no clue about at all.

However, Pechika wasn’t suited for fighting.

She had never actually trained herself to properly fight, and if it comes down to it, will probably not last long against another Magical Girl.

She lowered her head in shame. She was different from the 3 Magical Girls that stood before her.

“I’m not used to fighting. I don’t really like it, to be honest. But… if the *Land of Magic* actually has a plan for us, then… I’ll join you”

The priestess rubbed her chin and smiled.

“The reward that they have set. It is… how you say… *amazing*!”

“Well, that’s true, but it doesn’t seem like anything the *Land of Magic* would do, though, right?” asked Pechika.

“But… Please to consider! Cash reward is very big! Ten billion Yen is a lot of money! You are to be able to retire and enjoy life as normal, no?”

“Well yeah, but… still”

Pechika was the only one that was still unsure about all of this. Her ‘shy and introverted junior high school girl’ personality began to leak out again.

However, she felt that the atmosphere around her was overall pleasant. Everyone was happy about the reward they might get, and everyone’s laughing together. So Pechika just stayed silent about her worries.

The black and white creature that was summoned, Fal, continued his explanation.

“Now, I say that you four make a party, Pon! Teamwork is important, and Magical Girls are able to officially register a party of up to 4 people, Pon! When you install the map app on your Magical Phones, your party member’s status will be displayed! That includes location, and any items they might be carrying, Pon!”

The 3 Magical Girls looked at each other. Then, their gazes fell to Pechika.

With all 3 girls staring at her, Pechika suddenly felt immense pressure being brought down her shoulders.

Pechika understood what they were trying to do.

They probably wanted to set up a party with Pechika. However, Pechika didn’t feel particularly useful due to her skillset. Not only is her power unsuitable for combat, but she’s also not really the bravest girl in the world.

The centaur-like Magical Girl approached Pechika.

“That reminds me. You still haven’t told us your Magical Skill. If you don’t mind, we’d like to know”

“Ah yes! That is to be very useful!” replied the girl with the priestess uniform.
Pechika fidgeted a bit.

“Ah… Um… Well… My Magical Skill is to… Cook anything and make it delicious… if I touch it for 5 minutes… Yeah”

The 3 Magical Girls began to look at each other, unsure of how to react.

Pechika knew that would happen. It’s not very useful in combat, after all. Her chest began to tighten up from all the embarrassment.

Fal flied over to the 3 Magical Girls.

“Well… It’s possible to switch party members in the middle of the game, Pon! If you want to, that is”

The 3 Magical Girls looked at each other again. It seems they may have come to a conclusion.

Clantail nodded.

The girls formed a party, and included Pechika within that party.

It’s been 2 hours. Already, the other girls were treating Pechika mostly like a problem child.

Pechika couldn’t really blame them.

As of now, since the party needed about 4 people to be useful, Pechika was included. That means she was basically a bench player, a substitute until they find a better teammate.

Right now, the 3 Magical Girls were sitting cheerfully, discussing about their own encounters with the skeletons they had to fight.

Because of Pechika’s timid and cowardly personality, she’d be unsuitable for a fight. Not to mention, she didn’t exactly fight her share. She stayed quiet for most of the conversation.

Instead, she managed to get to know the names and appearances of the Magical Girls.

The Shaman-like Magical Girl, with the Shrine Priestess uniform. Her name was Miyokata Nonako.

She wore a barrette with a Yin-Yang pattern on her hair. Specifically, on the parts of her hair that were extended down to her waist.

Her robes were colored white, with some areas highlighted with a deep red hue.

For some reason, she writes her name in all Kanji.

Even though her dress and outfit look distinctly Japanese, the way she acts, and the way she speaks is unlike a normal Japanese person.

“The character of the Magical Girl is *super cool*! They are cute! They are strong! That is, how you say, *common sense* in my country!”

Well, it’s clear that from that remark and her accent that she’s foreign.

Maybe she was born outside of Japan?

Her Magical Skill is *the ability to ally with any animal*. She did say however, that it doesn’t work for the skeletons, so Pechika assumes that the power is limited to biological animals. Although technically an animal species, it probably doesn’t work on humans either since she can’t seem to use it on her or any of the other Magical Girls.

The Magical Girl doll is called Leonetta.

By Magical Girl *doll*, she literally looks like she’s a humanoid doll, or a puppet, or… something like that.

Wearing a long blue ribbon, a doll-like gothic Lolita dress, a bonnet, and apparently a good fighter as well.

Pechika observed Leonetta’s movements. Leonetta’s joints are spherical, with ball-like shapes connecting them. Just like how a wooden doll is connected.

Though she may dress elegantly, she seems to have a foul mouth. Not to mention a very sarcastic personality.

Kind of like those bullies at middle school.

Leonetta always seems to get in fights with Miyokata. That much Pechika could tell from their conversations.

Leonetta would always tease Miyokata, and the two would argue.

Leonetta's Magical Skill is *the ability to control humanoid puppets*. Her power can't affect humanoids in general, as it didn't work on the skeletons.

Apparently, if she found something like a mannequin, or just a doll, she could control it.

Finally, the Centaur Magical Girl, Clantail.

However, Pechika was mistaken. She wasn't a centaur. At least, she wasn't in the technical definition.

Her Magical Skill is *the ability to change her lower half into any animal*.

During the skeleton fight, she transformed her lower half into a crocodile to fight them off. The ones that remained were trampled when she became half-horse.

Clantail normally prefers to be in a form with a 4-legged animal, such as a horse or a deer.

It's clear that she's the leader of this whole group.

Whenever Leonetta and Miyokata get into a fight, Pechika can only stare silently, and Clantail will usually break them up.

These 3 girls were fighters. These 3 girls were able to defend themselves. During their travels, skeletons would often pop up, and all 3 of the girls would quickly form battle formations and fight.

Pechika merely watched in the sidelines.

Since she couldn't be useful in a fight, she did what she *could* be useful in. Cooking.

She would cook them the most delicious meals they had ever eaten and fed them whenever they took a small break.

The team enjoyed these foods, and it's probably what keeps Pechika feeling like she's not a burden to the team.

Fact. Pechika's biggest reason for being a Magical Girl was to become attractive and beautiful.

When she became Pechika, she felt overwhelming confidence. With that confidence, Pechika was able to even do things she normally wouldn't be brave enough to do as Chika.

That included fighting criminals sometimes.

However, that was because Pechika was the only Magical Girl. She had no one to compare her strength to, and she actually felt like she was capable of something.

With these 3, she's outclassed. They're so much better at the fighting, at the leading, at everything.

Pechika was just another Magical Girl, and not a very good one either.

Essentially, Pechika felt like she was Chika again. A lone drop of water in the sea. Unnoticed, and not really quite special.

Nothing has changed since junior high.

She's still sneaking behind more confident friends. Except, where she used to be able to just run and escape the problems, she has no choice but to confront them here.

The Clantail Team had just encountered another group of skeletons. As usual, Miyokata, Leonetta, and Clantail worked together to handle them.

Pechika was watching from the shadows, in safety. The skeletons hadn't seen her.

From her point of view, the fight went by very fast. The girls made short work of the enemies. It ended in only a few seconds.

After the sounds of fighting stopped, Pechika took a peek, and saw only white debris. Presumably the remains of the skeletons.

"Ah, I told you I had a feeling that there is to be skeletons that appear here!"

"Heh, that's good. More skeletons defeated means more loot, right?"

“Hahaha! You are to be correct! I must say that I enjoy this little *competition* we have”

Miyokata and Leonetta were at it again. Sometimes they’d argue, and then sometimes they’d tease each other like this.

“Speaking of loot, how many Magical Candies do we have?”

Clantail interrupted the two, clearly focused on something they haven’t counted for a while.

Both the Magical Girls checked their Magical Phones.

“I have *seventeen*!”

“Ugh, 15”

“And mine says 29. Pechika, how about you?”

All eyes moved to Pechika. She was a bit startled at the question.

Though she knew the answer already, she looked at her Magical Phone just to confirm it. Sure enough…

“I uh… I have… 0… for now”

Pechika involuntarily shrugged.

At the looks of disbelief by the other 3 Magical Girls, Pechika showed them her Magical Phone’s status screen.

Sure enough, a large ‘0’ was shown in the Magical Candy counter.

“How is that possible?” asked Miyokata.

“Well… Magical Candies are given when you defeat enemies right? It’s not like it’s shared amongst the team. It’s individual. That’s why some of you have more or less than the other”

Clantail looked at her Magical Phone. She checked the status screen. Sure enough, all of their names were displayed.

Clantail, Miyokata Nonako, Leonetta, and finally, Pechika.

Leonetta wasted no time and sighed loudly.

“That’s cause she barely does any *work*! We’re the ones doing all the fighting. She’s just tagging along”

Pechika couldn’t really argue, so she just shrugged while bowing her head.

Clantail put her hands on her chin, thinking.

Then, she browsed her Magical Phone again, and found something that made her smile.

“Says here there’s a *sharing* function. We could give some of our Magical Candies to you”

Leonetta looked back at Clantail.

“What? Why? Are you serious? If we do that, that’s just more work for us and *less* work for her”

“What if we all distribute our Magical Candies equally”

“…So you’re suggesting Communism? Look how *that* turned out in every country that has them”

“There’s no harm. The enemies aren’t too hard to beat, right? Don’t think of it as Communism, think of it like… an RPG. Experience Points! The whole party gets them”

Leonetta raised her eyebrow for a bit.

Clantail’s theory makes some sense.

In RPGs, whenever a party faces a difficult boss, it’s a chance for their weaker characters to grow, by piggybacking on a stronger character, they can share the Experience Points they have.

That way, the party gets stronger as a whole, because the weaker character can get into the fights now.

Miyokata chimed in,

“Still… if she is to get greedy…”

Pechika felt like she was just becoming more of a burden. Clantail had to look after her, and it’s clear the two other Magical Girls didn’t exactly consider her useful either.

She wanted to disappear.

It’s been 3 days in the game.

Although Fal said that game time is faster than real time, it doesn’t change the fact that the Magical Girls had been at it for 3 whole days.

Thus… tiredness began to set in, as they didn’t exactly have a lot of time to get a break.

“Leonetta, you doing alright?” asked Clantail.

Leonetta grudgingly nodded. She didn’t want to admit it, but her stomach was growling, and she was a little tired.

“I killed a bunch of skeletons, and now they won’t show up anymore. Dammit, gonna have to find new hunting grounds.”

Hunting grounds. That’s a word that Pechika rarely hears in the real world.

Beep

A black and white spherical creature popped out of Leonetta’s Magical Phone. She had clicked on the *Help* button.

“Yes? Did you need anything, Pon?”

Fal had shown up, answering their summons.

“Skeletons stopped showing up in the usual spots. You know where I can find more to kill?”

“Ah! The skeletons respawn every day, Pon! First thing in the morning!”

“Dammit… How much candies do I have to grind before I can level up in this game?”

“Level up?”

Fal didn’t exactly have an expressive face, but his tone of voice was that of confusion.

“There are no levels in this game, Pon!”

“Huh? Then what are the candies for?”

“They’re currency! You use them in the shop, Pon! Lots of items to purchase! The shops are in the Town, Pon! Besides, It’s inconvenient to use real money, so we use Magical Candies!”

None of the 4 Magical Girls had even realized there *was* a shop. Was it an app, or a physical shop in the city?

Fal’s eyes widened.

“Ah! I should tell you. The Grassland Area has been unlocked! Just recently, Pon!”

“What’s that mean?”

“That means another group of players has cleared this area and unlocked a new one! Anyone can move to new areas, Pon! So it’s a win-win! But don’t forget the main *game clear* objective, Pon!”

Other players have already made progress, and here they are not even realizing that they were collecting money for shops.

Leonetta’s scowl was visible to all 3 Magical Girls. It’s clear she wasn’t in a good mood.

Clantail quickly walked over to Leonetta, staring her down, as if to calm her.

“Okay. Let’s all just head back to the Town for now. We’ll find the shop and get our bearings there”

☆ Shadow Gale

The Black Nurse, Shadow Gale.

Clad in a black nurse dress, with a gigantic wrench on her right hand, and gigantic scissors on her left.

She had placed the weapons on the holsters on her belt.

Shadow Gale had never felt so much adrenaline and power before.

In the real world, she could never fully utilize her Magical Girl abilities, since many of her enemies are human.

Here, she can do as much as she wants.

She placed her hand on her forehead. To her surprise, she wasn't even sweating.

Around her, the remains of a huge battle. Red skeleton bones littered the ground. Stretching out far around her.

All of them were her opponents. All of them were defeated. All without breaking a sweat.

She couldn't help but smirk a little.

"Well, I guess it doesn't matter what color it is. Skeletons are still skeletons… Masked Wonder, how's your end?" she asked.

The Magical Girl named Masked Wonder, clad in black spandex, with a mask attached around her eyes, and a cape, answered with a pose.

She raised her right arm to the side, placed her left to her chest, and spread out her legs.

Then, she shouted,

"Victory!!!"

This was Masked Wonder's Victory Pose.

"Um… Are you okay?" asked Shadow Gale anxiously.

Masked Wonder's pose became even more extreme and exaggerated. There were clear strains that she was suffering.

Shadow Gale could see some reddish bruises all over Masked Wonder.

“Not to worry about me! Nothing can defeat the amazing Masked Wonder… Although, they might just be able to cause a bit of pain, hehe… ow.”

“Curious. How did you get injured like that? They didn’t even touch you.”

A voice came from behind Masked Wonder. It came from another Magical Girl, sitting on a wheelchair, with a bird-shaped eyepatch on her left eye.

“I uh… I threw some rocks at it, and next thing I know it hit me again… but rocks can’t hurt Masked Wonder!”

Masked Wonder replied triumphantly.

The wheelchair girl continued on, driving her wheelchair forward as she spoke.

“Perhaps there’s a correlation between their colors and their strength and abilities. We saw a Monster Picture Book at the shop in Town. We should purchase that immediately as our next goal. It could give us more info on these new creatures.”

The wheelchair girl then moved over to Shadow Gale. The girl urged Shadow Gale to check her Magical Phone for how many candies they received.

Shadow Gale took out her phone, and sure enough, when she looked at her new amount, it had increased to 56.

“87!?”

A sudden shout from Masked Wonder broke the silence.

“This is good. We can buy so many more things in the shop at this rate”

“Awesome! Wow, these red skeletons drop way more candies than the white ones.”

“They are also much stronger than the white ones, let’s not forget. It seems this new Grassland Area will be tougher than the Wasteland Area. While I expected the change, it is not exactly welcoming. Our priority should still be unlocking new areas.”

The wheelchair Magical Girl, named Pfle, nodded to herself while thinking of a plan.

“For now, let’s return to the town of the Grassland Area. Prepare the map!”
She moved her wheelchair in a direction, and Masked Wonder and Shadow Gale immediately followed her.

Nothing has changed from the real world. They had been partners then, and they are partners now.

Mamori Totoyama has always been a close ally of Kanoe Hitokouji. Even when they became Magical Girls, this has not changed. This will never change.

Mamori Totoyama became the Magical Girl known as Shadow Gale.

Kanoe Hitokouji became the Magical Girl known as Pfle.

As Magical Girls, as they were as humans, Shadow Gale continued to loyally protect Pfle from any threat, no matter what.

Maybe it was loyalty. Maybe it was love. Maybe it was an addiction.

It didn’t matter, Shadow Gale will always protect Pfle. It’s been that way since they first met in real life.

Kanoe’s mansion was known as the Hitokouji Mansion. Passed down her family for generations.

A modern day mansion, passed down for generations. That would cause rumors and stories.

Sure enough, there were many stories of the Hitokouji family. Some of them compared them to monsters.

The Hitokouji Mansion was only 1 minute away from town. You would know because many of the names of the buildings nearby were named ‘Hitokouji’.

Even the bus stop was named ‘Hitokouji Mansion’.

The Totoyama family had always served the Hitokouji family loyally for many generations.

Mamori's name, meaning 'To Protect' in Japanese, was given to her by her parents because they believed she would always protect Kanoe.

That is the meaning of her life.

That is Mamori's purpose.

Protect Kanoe.

Since then, Mamori has always stood behind Kanoe as her loyal servant.

In those days, she had heard many people around Kanoe offer praise to her. About 60% of them sounded like empty flattery.

40% of them seemed to be genuine.

Mamori had met Kanoe ever since the two were born. Since they were still toddlers.

Kanoe had excelled in her grades and her physical abilities. She rose to the top, and Mamori loyally and obediently followed her.

Preschool.

Elementary School.

Junior High.

And now, High School.

The two were always together, and age didn't change that. From a young age, Mamori had grown closer to Kanoe.

Regardless of what other people think of them, Mamori stood by Kanoe's side.

Now they were Magical Girls. As usual, nothing has changed.

If Kanoe wanted something done, Mamori would accomplish it. For her sake.

If Kanoe said "Jump!" Mamori would say "Understood" and jump as high as she could.

When they first entered this game world, Pfle's first order to Shadow Gale was,

"Bandage me up".

Since Shadow Gale's outfit was a black nurse's outfit, it came with bandages prepared.

"There are two types of Magical Girls. The ones that fight, and the ones that don't," said Pfle.

"Why do you want to be bandaged?" asked Shadow Gale.

"Because I lack the capability of fighting. I entrust that task to you. My purpose is different."

Indeed, with her wheelchair, it's hard to imagine her fighting.

You don't usually sit in a wheelchair unless you're either weak, crippled, sick, or old. However, a wheelchair doesn't mean you're useless.

Pfle had predicted that this virtual reality worked like a game since the time she was transported here in the first place.

She had clued in that as soon as they defeated their skeletons, that the items that they dropped would be useful as some kind of currency.

Indeed, she hadn't relied on any support ever since she got here. Pfle had a knack for thinking and strategizing.

She had examined her Magical Phone inside and out for any hints to this world.

If this world worked like an RPG, and the players are the Magical Girls, then maybe there might be a cheat code of some kind.

When she first arrived, Pfle had also wondered this.

They haven't encountered any other players, so… if there are other players, would they be Magical Girls as well?

Or is Shadow Gale and Pfle the only two players in the game?

"I still don't understand why you need to be bandaged."

“It makes me look weak and vulnerable. I have a wheelchair, and I am bandaged.”

“What good will that do?”

“This makes it easy to determine our enemies. People with good faith will approach us kindly, whilst people who wish to take advantage of us will see me and assume I am an easy target. I trust you to handle the hostile ones.”

So it was a gambit.

Shadow Gale would still follow her, but sometimes she just had to know what is on Pfle’s mind.

It took a while, but they finally encountered someone other than themselves, and that someone approached them in peace.

Masked Wonder.

With a flowing cape, and an eye mask, with a spandex suit as well. A classic American style superhero.

With green eyes, blonde flowing hair, facial features that are commonly found in Americans, and a voice that commands power, she really is emulating American superheroes.

Their meeting was something that wasn’t easy to forget.

While walking through the ruins of what appeared to be abandoned buildings, they heard a voice coming from the top of one of the buildings.

“Hold it right there, citizens! I am the incarnation of justice that allows no evil to exist! Are you friend… or foe!?”

When they looked up, they saw a girl jump down from the building, creating a large dust cloud as she landed.

Her pose when she landed was that of a raised right arm, left arm folded towards her chest, and left knee bent, with her right leg extended.

A classic superhero landing pose.

“My name is Masked Wonder! I serve only JUSTICE! Evil doers beware, for I am… a Magical Girl!!!”

That was the most over-the-top self-introduction that Shadow Gale had ever seen.

Pfle didn’t flinch, and replied,

“Greetings, Masked Wonder. My name is Pfle, and this is my associate, Shadow Gale. Pleased to meet you”

Pfle said these words as if nothing strange had ever happened.

“Looks like you might’ve been injured in your fight with the skeletons there! I’m here to help!”

“As you have pointed out. For your kindness, we thank you”

“No thanks necessary, my friend! Helping those in need is a superheroine’s job!”

And with that introduction, the three of them formed an alliance. They walked over to the Town, and completed the events as quickly as possible.

That’s how they unlocked the next area.

The reason they were so fast is Pfle’s Magical Skill.

‘Possesses a magical wheelchair’

One of the uses for her wheelchair would be to travel at speeds that would cause sonic booms and explosions.

Areas that would take hours only took minutes to reach.

Once they arrived, Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder made short work of any enemies there. Rinse and repeat and soon the entire Wasteland Area was cleared.

The three Magical Girls were unstoppable so far.

With Pfle at the head of the team, and Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder doing most of the physical stuff, and with little personal conflict, so far, their team had apparently made the most

progress in the game.

They plan to keep it that way.

☆ Magical Daisy

Magical Candies function as currency in this world.

Magical Candies are collected automatically once monsters were killed.

That means that, although it's not the main objective, it would still be useful to find monsters and kill them in order to collect more Magical Candy.

But something seems a little strange to Daisy.

Not only that, but Nokko-Chan felt it as well.

"Fal, can I ask you a question?" asked Daisy, once again summoning the black and white creature.

"Sure thing, Pon!"

"About Magical Candies. They sound familiar. Have I heard of them before?"

"Hmm… Before this game, you mean? You might have, Pon! It was a term used in another selection test."

"Recently?"

"Kind of! The Magical Girls of that test were told to compete for helping others. They earned Magical Candy if they helped people, and the amount is based on how much that helpfulness affected the person being helped, Pon!"

"Ah, I kind of heard something about that. So, what happened?"

"There was some… resistance. Competition tends to do that. Anyways, we just borrowed the term and used it here, Pon!"

Daisy didn't really keep up too much with news from the *Land of Magic*, but she heard rumors occasionally.

She didn't quite know what happened, but for some reason, the *Land of Magic* is keeping shut about whatever happened a year ago.

Still, what Fal said might as well be true. If so, then there's really nothing much that can be said.

Just happened to be named the same.

Team Daisy had arrived in one of the shops in town. It was unmanned, like everything else. Though, there was a bell that you could ring.

As soon as Daisy rang it, a menu popped open. The team browsed the list, with Fal eagerly awaiting to see what they would purchase.

"Hmm, what's this? It's 5 Candies for a *Pass*."

Daisy pointed at the item on the list.

"Ah, you need a Pass if you want to travel between areas, Pon! Each party needs 1!"

"Alright, so that's gotta be a must-buy, right guys?"

The other 3 girls nodded in unison. Daisy pressed the button on the menu and brought a *Pass*.

"Er… Preserved Food?"

"Oh, you *will* get hungry even if it's a virtual world, so do be sure to eat up, Pon!"

Right. It's been a while since they were here, but they are feeling a bit famished.

Then, Daisy saw something strange. An item marked simply as 'R'.

Most of the other items were stated very clearly, and it's understandable on what they're meant to do.

Health Potion

Health Potion (Large)

Health Potion (Small)

Preserved Food

Sure, sometimes she didn't understand what they are, but once she did, the names are pretty straightforward.

And then there's that one. Marked with a red color, and named only a single letter. 'R'. Not only that, the price was steep.

Preserved Food costs around 1 Magical Candy. A large Health Potion costs 20. 'R', whatever it is, costs 100.

"Fal, what's this?" asked Daisy.

"Ah, that stands for 'Random', Pon! If you pick that, you get a random item! There's a chance that you might get some ridiculously rare ones, Pon!"

"Ohoho?"

A malicious sounding laugh was heard from behind Daisy. Turning around, she could see Genopsycho grinning maniacally.

"It's absolutely *important* that we take that chance! We'll get a super rare game-breaking item for sure!"

"Er… I don't think you should count your chickens before they hatch, if you know what I mean"

"Ah, but you don't know how experienced I am with Gacha style games, now, do you, Daisy? I've got so much debt from spending money that I've got almost *nothing* to lose in real life!"

"…Sounds very depressing, Ru. You should really get it together"

"Oh, shut up, Nyan Nyan. It's my… *collector heart*!!! It calls for the items! So come on, Daisy! Buy one of them R's already!"

Daisy had a sheepish grin and scratched her head. She said very softly,

"I mean… even if we wanted to, we don't have enough candies."

Genopsycho's eyes widened. She looked around. Nyan Nyan shook her head, and Nokko-Chan simply shrugged.

Taking into account their entire candy amount, they only had 20. If they wanted to buy the Gacha, they need around 80 more.

Genopsycho screamed out in defeat.

"Dammit! And it would've been a very fun and lucky pick too, I guarantee it…"

Suddenly Fal popped up behind Genopsycho.

"Good news, Pon! Since this is your first time in the shop, the first purchase of the Random item will only cost you 10 candies, Pon!"

Genopsycho's eyes lit up happily.

"Yes! Yes! C'mon!!! That's a good sign! Buy it! Buy it! Buy it!"

@NyanNyan shrugged and smiled.

"I'm okay with anything, Ru."

"C'mon, Daisy! We've still got 10 candies left! We can always get more!"

Faced with the insistent begging of Genopsycho, Daisy finally relented and purchased the Random item for 10 candies.

The resulting item that they received.

Map.

Their Magical Phones beeped, and sure enough, a *Map* application was added. When they opened it, it showed a map of the whole area.

It also showed the location of the Town and Shop, not to mention the Party Members' current location in the world.

Genopsycho laughed proudly.

“Ha ha! I *told* you, we’d get a very useful item! Such is the power of a compulsive gambler!”

Genopsycho proclaimed boldly.

“Hm, this would be a good time to pursue more information about our surroundings, Ru,” suggested @NyanNyan.

Magical Daisy agreed. When she looked at the map, she saw everything about the Wasteland Area, including the exit gate to the Grassland Area. Right now, her objective is clear.

“We should head over to the Grassland Area.”

Daisy was determined to participate in this game. Although she would never usually assume the position of a leader, she felt compelled to lead her team.

After all, they all looked up to her, it seems, so naturally, it falls upon her to lead them to victory.

Right now, other teams may have made progress, so it’s best to shorten that distance. Use their progress to Team Daisy’s advantage. They quickly used the map to make their way towards the exit of the area.

As soon as they reach the exit, they saw a huge gigantic gate barring entry. The gate itself was carved into the mountainside.

Along the way, they had defeated several groups of skeletons that spawned, and now, with the *Pass* items that they have, they entered the gate into the Grasslands Area.

When the gate opened, a large gust of wind blew over their faces. The landscape changed across the gate. Lush grasses of green as far as the eye can see.

The grass blades were about ankle high. Not only that, it looked like when they passed through the gate, the sun was less hot. The air was cooler.

Genopsycho bent her hip to the side and put her visor down.

“Okay… now that’s just cool. Wonder if they’ll have a Town in this area too?”

Nokko-Chan walked over to Genopsycho and nodded,

“They should. There won’t be any point to collecting our candies if we can’t spend them somewhere.”

“Alright! So, I’m ready to head out when you are”

Daisy nodded. She continued to check on the map. It looks like everyone else has settled in to the new area.

In the corner, Genopsycho was shadow boxing alone, throwing punches and kicks at the air. She seems to be having a great time.

@NyanNyan then spoke up,

“If I recall correctly, I read that there are some events that you can do to open gates and whatnot. These events are also able to award you with Magical Candy, Ru.”

@NyanNyan said all this while crouching down, staring intently at the grass.

She had a point. Events would be important. After all, they do want to actually clear the game eventually, right?

But in this game world, Magical Daisy was actually able to unleash her full power. Because their enemies weren’t people, she was able to fight with full strength.

Her Magical Skill would be useful, since it didn’t matter if the things you killed were NPC monsters.

Fighting can be pretty fun…

…But she can’t think like that.

She checked her map, and sure enough, the map updated to the area they were in. It showed them exactly where the Town was in this area.

“Alright, first we head to Town, find info about the *Clear Event*, maybe even find some hints. Then we’ll figure out some good spawn points for the monsters and get us some candies, alright?”

The other 3 Magical Girls nodded, and they began their journey.

About 5 minutes of walking later, they had encountered it.

“Oh my… They’re red now”

“That’s… a little grotesque, don’t you think?”

Monsters. Skeletons that popped out of the ground. Squirming, crawling. They’re just like the skeletons they faced before, only now, they’re red.

“Ah, *Skeleton Mark II*, Ru?”

Color changes tend to mean one thing in RPG games, an increase in strength. Considering that logic, Daisy immediately adopted a battle stance.

“Alright guys, don’t let your guard down. These things are probably tougher than the white ones. Let’s focus our attacks and hit em with everything we’ve got!”

Genopsycho pulled down her visor.

@NyanNyan raised one leg in a Chinese martial arts stance.

Nokko-Chan lifted her mop in preparation.

They’ve done this plenty of times before.

First, Genopsycho would go in and fight them. She can test how powerful they are thanks to her Magical Skill, ‘*Possesses an invincible suit*’.

Her suit, if her visor is pulled down to her eyes, becomes invincible to any attack. Therefore, she’s perfect for the first wall of defense.

In fact, Genopsycho would probably be impervious to even Daisy’s *Daisy Beam*, meaning she could just fire a palm-sized one and destroy all the skeletons, and Genopsycho would still be standing.

The thought crossed her mind…

…She can’t take that risk.

Even though it might seem exciting to kill the enemies in one blow, Genopsycho was very much an ally.

The risk was too great to test.

Genopsycho continued her assault on the enemy. Rampaging and kicking, with her pistol still holstered to her hip.

The reason she hasn't used her gun is because she was too busy fighting hand-to-hand.

Partly to test out how powerful she was against these skeletons, and how powerful they were against her.

With a swift kick, Genopsycho managed to destroy the entire body of one of the skeletons.

"Ah! They're about as weak as the white ones! This should be no problem for us!"

Like a sports player, @NyanNyan immediately jumped into the scene, kicking the skeleton's head away like a soccer ball.

Nokko-Chan also managed to crush the skull of the skeleton with her mop.

Magical Daisy couldn't wait to get into the fight.

She jumped up and headed towards the skeletons grouped up together.

Elbow shot.

Roundhouse kick.

Palm strike.

Front kick.

Every hit she did scattered the skeleton's bones apart. This is perfect. Battle felt so good. The skeletons were falling apart easily.

Now for the big finale.

"Everyone get back! I'm about to do my killshot!"

She had decided. She had to make sure everyone left the area before she committed to this attack, as it is lethal.

Even though she could easily just use normal attacks, there were *Magical Daisy* fans here! This is a little fanservice for them!

She pointed her finger at the skeleton, and smiled.

“Daisyyyyyyyyy Beaaaaaaaaaam!!!!”

She shouted with all her power, and a yellow burst of light shot from the tip of her finger. It shot itself towards the red skeleton.

Daisy imagined its body disintegrating, its bones falling apart as it was shot with her ultimate move.

But… something’s wrong…

…The skeleton stood still, and didn’t move.

@NyanNyan’s eyes widened. She pounced on the skeleton that Daisy was aiming for, and immediately kicked it apart.

Genopsycho pointed at Magical Daisy, one hand on her mouth, and screamed.

Why can’t Daisy focus or hear anything?

This is weird…

She wanted to ask why, but when she moved to talk, she choked on something. She coughed it out.

Warm liquid…

Why is it so warm?

She looked up at the sky. It’s a nice, clear, blue sky. The sun is shining warmly. Was it the sun…?

Then, Magical Daisy looked down at her stomach.

It was stained red. Bright red.

Blood.

The blood flowed and flowed. Daisy tried to cover it with her arms, to no avail.

Her heart beated. That's all she could hear. Her heartbeat pulsing stronger and stronger.

Magical Daisy lost consciousness.

☆ Pechika

After reaching town in the Grassland Area, Team Clantail had decided to split up.

Of course, they still needed to hunt down monsters. They need the Magical Candy, after all. However, they also needed to find the *Clear Event* that they keep hearing about, not to mention understand their surroundings.

And so, two parties were made. The hunting party, and the scouting party.

Although it was a big risk to split the team, thanks to the *Map* they purchased, they should be able to know exactly where everyone is.

When Pechika heard that there was going to be a combat-focused team *and* a scouting-focused team, she was relieved.

She didn't have the courage to fight, but she still wanted to contribute to the team regardless.

Leonetta had always accused Pechika of just being dead weight, and not being a true contributing team member.

Pechika constantly heard Leonetta muttering to herself.

"Who the hell are those 3? Why are they so efficient? Wonder what their team is like".

Fal had kept them updated that another Magical Girl team, only consisting of 3 members, not 4, had made way more progress than the other teams.

The more time passed, the more frustrated Leonetta was.

She wanted to finish the game, and to do it fast. Pechika couldn't blame her. That's what she wanted to do as well, but it's not easy.

As soon as the team split up, Pechika volunteered to join the scouting group.

"Hahaha! Oh my, I am to be surprised! It's true that you would be better at to gather the information than the *real doll*."

Miyokata's words were filled with ill intent, all aimed at Leonetta. Leonetta herself gave a death glare that Pechika didn't dare look at.

And then there was Clantail's silent glare, managing to stop any fighting that those two constantly had.

Yeah, Pechika didn't want to be in the combat team where Clantail and Leonetta are. Those two are scary.

Miyokata wasn't as scary. Pechika could handle being with her.

"Ah my, my! The Grassland Area is… how do you say… comfortable, no? I do not want to return to the Wasteland Area"

"Um… I don't want to be rude, but could you be a bit less loud, please?"

"But it is good to have a *live audience* to talk to! Isn't that correct?"

"Well…"

"Pechika, how did you become such an interesting Magical Girl?"

"Well, like I said…"

"Ah! You are a very *cute* Magical Girl! A very cute Magical Girl of *justice*!"

"Ah, don't pull on my cheeks like that!"

Miyokata was a very…

…noisy person.

She couldn’t seem to shut her mouth, which Pechika didn’t really like, but she was the only friendly face she could handle.

When you look at this scene from afar, you’d probably be able to hear the laughter from far away.

Not to mention the constant chattering and talking.

Miyokata was constantly talking about Pechika. She had already begun sharing a bit about her life indirectly too.

She called Pechika ‘super cute’, and compared her to a friend that Miyokata had back in the real world. ‘Tama-Chan’.

Unfortunately, ‘Tama-Chan’ can’t be brought into the virtual world, according to Fal.

“It’s limited to only your costume and any weapons you have, Pon! Sorry!”

It’s been a long day, and the two sat perched on a rock. Hungry, they took out their Preserved Food that they bought from the store.

“So, the skeletons that we are to be fighting… I wish it wasn’t skeletons”

Pechika ate silently. The food was really horrible. The taste actually took her by surprise. The staleness of the food was incredible.

“You know, when the skeletons come, I cannot use my *magic* to help. It doesn’t work with them. I’m not very useful in the combat team,” said Miyokata.

Pechika looked up at her. She could feel her sentiment. At least Miyokata could fight, though.

I wonder how Miyokata would react if Pechika told her she’s only good for making good food. After all, that’s her Magical Skill.

“That is why, Pechika… That is why in this search party. I have another *objective*. I will be looking for new monsters that I can use my powers on! I will help the team!”

Miyokata’s eyes were shining with determination. She raised her fist

“When we find these monsters, please leave them to me! I will surely reward you and our teammates with new *followers*!”

“Ah… Yeah, sure”

Miyokata shook Pechika’s hand, rather furiously, in fact. She was confident that she would find a use for her powers here.

Since this is a Grassland Area, there should be *some* kind of animal-like monsters here, right?

“*Fuck*! *Piece of shit game*!”

It has been hours. There were no animal-like monsters that showed up.

Miyokata was clearly very angry. She wanted to get allies for her team, and animals was the most surefire way to do it.

Although no animal-type monsters showed up, they did find other Magical Girls. Other players.

Pechika and Miyokata reached the Town of the Grassland Area, and there, they met another player not from their team.

A Magical Girl in a wheelchair. With a bird eyepatch.

Her name was Pfle.

She was in the middle of some sort of Area Opening Mission. Meanwhile, the other members of her party were Candy Hunting.

Pfle looked very fragile. Even Pechika thought that with a simple punch, she would probably be broken and bruised.

Pfle was in a wheelchair, she had bandages all over her, and she doesn’t look capable of even fighting.

Why was she on her own while her other team members left fighting monsters?

“It appears various other parties have formed, as I thought.”

Pfle's voice was strong. Stronger than what Pechika would've imagined coming from someone like her.

It commanded a certain presence. If Pechika hadn't seen Pfle's figure, she would've imagined that it came from a rather powerful Magical Girl.

Oh that's right, Pfle was a Magical Girl.

Pechika shouldn't underestimate Pfle. Even bound to a wheelchair, she must've had powerful strength and physical abilities, at least compared to normal people.

"And yet, there is still some who prefer to work alone."

Work alone? Independently?

Pechika shuddered thinking about one lone Magical Girl fighting off a multitude of skeletons.

"There are groups hunting in the East of Town. Other groups are hunting in the South. It's not unusual, but perhaps this is a way of dividing territory. Red skeletons populate the Grassland Area. You two should be cautious."

"The skeletons that we have defeated still are as weak as the white ones. There is not much change, no?"

"That's false. The red ones are different from the white ones. They have a special property. They are able to reflect long-range attacks."

Pfle displayed an illustration from her Magical Phone.

The illustration was as clear as day, a picture of the red skeleton. All the details are high quality. It doesn't look like Pfle took a picture of this skeleton, though.

Name: Powered Skeleton

Candies Dropped: 8 – 12

Areas: Grassland

Group: 5 – 20 per group

Weakness: Fire

Reflects any long-ranged attack

Destroyed instantly via direct attacks

“A member of my party attacked without knowing the abilities of these creatures. She threw a stone at them, and it reflected back towards her. Very painful, but not lethal.”

Pfle said this all very calmly.

Miyokata took a closer look at Pfle’s Magical Phone.

“What’s this? *Monster Data*?”

“This is an app that I purchased in the Grassland store. The *Monster Picture Book*. I highly recommend it, as the information will be *very* useful. I’m sure you can imagine what would happen if someone were to attack these skeletons from range without knowing about their reflection mechanic.”

Pfle was right. This was crucial information. Pechika began to text Clantail on her Magical Phone

‘Red skeletons reflect long-range attacks’.

It feels like she’s finally contributing to her team at last. Pechika was glad that was the case.

“You two should visit the Grassland Area’s shop. They sell more items than the Wasteland Area. Weapons and Armor for example. Important for any Magical Girl. Although, the materials are a bit disappointing.”

Pechika had written down everything in her Magical Phone.

Afterwards, Pfle said farewell to the two. She had been a surprise help to Pechika and Miyokata.

As she left, she waved with a smile, bidding the two good luck.

“She seems like a nice person,” said Miyokata.

“I’m glad she was”

They had only met Pfle in their search. Other Magical Girls are probably hunting monsters and gathering Magical Candy.

Since the monsters in the Grassland Area dropped more candy, it makes sense for Magical Girls to hunt here.

In the Town, there were various different messages, mostly in the forms of posters. Hints to the game and whatnot.

The first big message was obvious.

Welcome to the Grassland Area Town!

Then there are other warnings.

Within the Grassland Area, beware of larger groups of monsters!

The shops sell different items than other areas!

Pechika recorded all of the hints in her Magical Phone.

“How unfortunate”

“Huh… what do you mean?”

“The chests in these houses are not *treasure chests*. The heroes should be able to find these things, no?”

“Well, I mean, it’s not mandatory…”

So apparently she can even complain about stuff like that.

For Pechika, this has generally been a very successful mission, considering that their actual purpose was information gathering.

Within one of the buildings in Town, Pechika grabbed a letter that was dropped there. She followed the instructions of that letter, and carried it towards a building in the Wasteland Area.

For doing that quest, they received hundreds of Magical Candies.

Miyokata immediately screamed out, “Mission success!!!” and clapped her hands. At least she can change moods very easily.

That night, at a predetermined point, the Scouting Team merged with the Combat Team.

In front of the Grassland Town, Team Clantail gathered around and sat around a campfire. All of them prepared to talk about the information they’ve gained.

They talked about the Magical Candies that they earned, whilst sitting around the fire, deep within the night sky.

Leonetta wasn’t looking too well. Perhaps she was tired. She barely talked at all throughout the whole thing.

Clantail was silent as always. Her deer tail was barely waving. Perhaps she’s also tired.

They did spend the whole day fighting. That must’ve been very tiring.

“We didn’t get anything”

…or maybe that wasn’t the reason.

“You two were not able to have found anything?”

“It’s not that we couldn’t find anything, it’s that we couldn’t actually do our work.”

Pechika and Miyokata were confused, but then Clantail began explaining.

“There was another Magical Girl. We wanted to hunt skeletons there, but she claimed the territory first. She drove us out. Told us to go find somewhere else to hunt.”

“How *mean*”

“Agreed. She wasn’t exactly very nice.”

Before Miyokata could say anything, Clantail sat down rather loudly, with her hooves plopping throughout the floor.

Leonetta said nothing. She only had her head down this whole time.

Miyokata looked at the two and decided to stay quiet for now.

Even Pechika thought this was strange. Leonetta was a very aggressive girl. She's not the type to just obey someone without a fight.

Clantail was also a very assertive girl. She wouldn't just let any other Magical Girl tell her what to do.

'*She drove us out*'.

Looking at the battered and tired appearances of Clantail and Leonetta, Pechika thought that there must be something else behind all this.

She took a bite out of the Preserved Food…

…Still tasteless.

Then her Magical Phone rang. Not just hers either, all the Magical Girls' Magical Phones rang.

Pechika took it out and saw what's on the screen. A message has appeared.

Event Alert! In 5 minutes, all players will be transported to the *Wasteland Area* Town Square!

☆ Shadow Gale

The landscape suddenly changed. The ground transformed before her eyes. The force of the transformation shook the ground beneath her, and Shadow Gale almost lost her balance.

When the bright light ceased, she found herself in a familiar place. A town square.

The game forcefully transported her here.

Surrounding her, however, was an amazing sight. All around her were other people, grouped up like her.

They were all Magical Girls.

A Shrine Priestess-looking Magical Girl was looking towards a Samurai Magical Girl.

“*Geisha*!!! *Harakiri*!!! *Bamboo Pole*!!!”

The Shrine Priestess was screaming strange words to the Samurai.

The Samurai Magical Girl simply ignored her.

A Maid Magical Girl, a Chinese Dress Magical Girl, and a Magical Girl that seems like she came out of a low budget sci-fi movie were standing in a corner.

They seemed to be discussing something within their group, their faces quite pale.

A tweed cap wearing, cape wearing Magical Girl was talking to her own group. This one looks like she came out of an old Detective book. She looked like a Detective herself.

And in another group, a Magical Girl with a deer body. Wagging her tail around, is she excited?

In that group was also a Magical Girl that looks like a chef. That one seemed very nervous and anxious.

Shadow Gale observed all of the Magical Girls with fascination.

Then her eyes stopped on one particular Magical Girl.

Shadow Gale slowly whispered over to Pfle, who was, as she suspected, nearby with her group.

“There. It’s that Magical Girl.”

She pointed out towards the girl she was looking at. A Magical Girl that seems to be wearing the costume of a hamster.

She was nibbling on a gigantic sunflower seed.

Beside her, was a Magical Girl with a bow and arrow, talking to the Hamster Magical Girl. Suspicious.

Shadow Gale took a look, and nodded to herself.

“I’m positive, that’s her. However, her size is different. It’s changed.”

At Shadow Gale’s words, Masked Wonder nodded, guaranteeing it.

While Pfle was collecting information in the Grassland Town, Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder were collecting candy.

The plan was simple, Pfle, being unsuitable for combat, would strategize and find a way to proceed through the game. Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder, being the best at fighting, would handle collecting candies.

Scouting and Combat.

Blue Collar and White Collar.

Workers and Capitalists.

Servant and Master.

Shadow Gale and Pfle’s relationship hasn’t changed, Pfle was the smarter one, Shadow Gale was the one capable of doing work.

They scoured the Grassland Area from one end to the other, stripping off any chance for collecting Magical Candies.

Any skeletons that showed up were quickly killed by Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder.

At the end of it, they rested, eating their Preserved Food.

Then, Masked Wonder noticed something.

“Hey, do you feel this?”

Shadow Gale looked at Masked Wonder. She had her hands to the ground.

Sensing something strange, Shadow Gale also placed her palms to the ground. At first she didn’t notice anything, but then…

Boom

Boom

Boom

She heard sounds… and the ground shook.

“Oh my god… what… is *that*”

Masked Wonder pointed outwards. Shadow Gale looked at where she was pointing, and she saw it.

Gigantic.

A monster?

Wait. It’s a girl.

A Magical Girl?

Shadow Gale rubbed her eyes in disbelief. She adjusted her eyesight. Nope. Not a lie. That’s a giant girl.

“Er… That’s… *big*”

“Judging from the scale… I’d say it’s safe to say we have a giant”

That Magical Girl is bigger than all 3 of her teammates combined. But there’s something much much worse…

…That giant is coming for them.

The ground shook whenever she walked. If she ran, who knows what would happen. She stopped about 100 meters away.

Shadow Gale wasn’t an expert, but she counted a height of 30 meters.
Then she spoke.

“This is *Cherna’s* hunting ground. Get away!”

Her voice was large. Very large. They could feel the shockwave that each word made.

Then she shrunk. She shrunk to their size.

“Cherna’s group found this hunting ground first! So this is Cherna’s territory! Find somewhere else to hunt! Go away!!!”

She’s less threatening in this size, but Shadow Gale can’t forget. Huge monster. Gigantic Magical Girl. Bad news.

“There’s nothing in the game rules that says you can claim territory!”

Masked Wonder shouted back defensively. She didn’t want to lose to the giant Magical Girl.

Although, if this Magical Girl actually got mad, *losing* to her would be a best case scenario. She’d probably break every bone in Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder’s body if she decided to fight in giant form.

How on earth were they going to expect to win against a gigantic Magical Girl.

She grew 30 meters, but could she grow any higher?

Sure they were powerful Magical Girls, but that girl is *also* a Magical Girl, so she’d just be stronger and just as fast.

Hopeless battle.

“If Cherna sees you here again, Cherna will be *very* angry!!!”

Cherna stomped her feet in anger, swaying around and flailing her arms.

“Impossible! That’s an *impossible* request! No amount of being cranky will change that!”

Okay, this is getting bad.

That Magical Girl’s face is getting redder and redder. She’s mad.

Shadow Gale grabbed Masked Wonder’s wrist and whispered to her.

“Hey, we can’t possibly beat her, not when you saw what she could do. We should run away. It’s not like anyone’s going to see us if we actually manage to win. We should do what she asks for now”

Masked Wonder shook off Shadow Gale's hand.

"A hero of justice can't just give up like that! I'm not going to let her just threaten us to back down!"

The Magical Girl immediately turned gigantic once more. 30 meters. An angry looking face.

"Hey… we should leave. *Now*!"

"My name is Masked Wonder! I represent *Justice*! I am a *Magical Girl*! And I will smite evil!"

After a huge pose, Masked Wonder jumped.

She jumped and… she was still in the air.

What!?

Shadow Gale's eyes widened with surprise. Masked Wonder only lightly kicked the ground, but jumped over 100 meters, and went straight to the gigantic Magical Girl.

Her speed and distance were overwhelmingly fast.

Then, she punched the gigantic Magical Girl, who didn't have time to react.

That punch should've done nothing, but the giant Magical Girl was flung away. The distance was over 30 meters away.

Shadow Gale expected a giant earthquake when the giant Magical Girl would crash land, but there wasn't any.

When she landed, it didn't make any shake, and she landed quite softly as well.

While still lying on the ground, the giant Magical Girl looked at the two Magical Girls far away from them, and she tilted her head in confusion.

Masked Wonder safely landed back near Shadow Gale.

"What!? What did you just do!? Is this your Magical Skill?"

“Hahaha! We will not succumb to intimidation and threats! I’m sure she’ll feel sorry for having forced us away, now, won’t she?”

Shadow Gale looked stunned.

“Come face us! If you think you can defeat us!”

The gigantic Magical Girl stood up, angry and ready to fight.

“Please wait!”

Another voice. Not Shadow Gale. Not Masked Wonder. Not the gigantic Magical Girl.

Blue gemstones began to fall on the giant’s shoulders, and from them, appeared a girl.

White cape, blue one-piece with a cloak to match, decorated in small parts with gems. She also had a tail, white with black stripes.

Just a while ago, there was nothing, now there was this girl.

Just when Shadow Gale thought she was being outnumbered, suddenly, the girl on the giant’s shoulders made a pose.

She crossed her arms in front of her face, and extended her index fingers.

“The dancing sparkling blue figure in the battlefield… I am… *Lapis Lazuline*!”

Masked Wonder walked over to the giant, and Lapis Lazuline.

She raised her right arm, crossed her left, and bent one knee. *Victory Pose*.

“My name is *Masked Wonder*! I am the symbol of justice, a *Magical Girl*!”

The two stared at each other for a while, and the girl who identified herself as Lapis Lazuline jumped down from the giant girl’s shoulders.

Then she shook hands with Masked Wonder.

What just happened?

Lapis Lazuline turned back towards the giant.

“Hey, now, Cherny, were you fighting this warrior of justice?”

The gigantic girl shrunk down to original size.

“But, but, Melville told us to defend our hunting territory from intruders!”

“Nya?”

Another voice. Coming from… where?

Suddenly, just nearby, there was a light hazy shimmer within the air. It then transformed into a greenish color, and finally, the figure of a Magical Girl could be seen.

With a huge bow on her right hand and a harpoon on her left hand, a light gray cloak, and slender legs.

Her hair was golden, and long, with dark flowers decorating it. Her ears were pointed, like elves in fantasy stories.

Why is everyone suddenly here? It feels like a whole party just showed up.

“You have amazing strength and skill to best Cherna. I applaud you for that. You are certainly quite worthy of claiming this area”

Shadow Gale raised her eyebrow.

It looks like the elf girl approves of them, but why does Shadow Gale feel so anxious around her.

Is it because of her strangely calm voice?

Is it because of her absurdly large bow?

Whatever the reason, Shadow Gale doesn’t want to let her guard down around this elf girl.

“Did you hear that, you guys? Melly just told you that you’re free to hunt for monsters here! Good news, right?”

Lapis Lazuline said with a smile. She looked over at the elf girl, and the elf girl nodded.

The elf girl then started to turn dark green, and before they knew it, disappeared into the grass.

The Hamster girl turned gigantic, and Lapis Lazuline jumped on her shoulders once more.

“Well, that was fun! I’ll see you all later! Goodbye!”

With that, the two Magical Girls walked off into the distance, as Shadow Gale and Masked Wonder stood there.

Shadow Gale told the whole story to Pfle. Now would be a good time to do so, seeing as almost every Magical Girl was gathered in this Town Square.

Pfle nodded slowly.

“And so, that hamster girl, she seems to have the power to change her size, correct? Certainly useful as an ability. It must be hard to use in the real world, as it would attract attention.”

Pfle’s tone hasn’t shown a hint of surprise, only analysis.

“Also, you mentioned the elf girl, Shadow Gale? I don’t think you’ve properly caught on to her powers. It doesn’t seem like invisibility, but more like camouflage. Optical color changing. Convenient. We should not make them our enemies”

Pfle looked over to Masked Wonder,

“As I expected, you are indeed quite powerful, Masked Wonder. As expected of an enforcer of justice”

Masked Wonder blushed and smiled.

Before they knew it, a Magical Girl walked up to them.

She crossed her arms over her face, extended her two index fingers, and smiled.

“The dancing sparkling blue figure in the battlefield… *Lapis Lazuline*!”

Masked Wonder raised her right arm, folded her left, and bent her right knee. *Victory Pose*.

“My name is *Masked Wonder*! I am the embodiment of justice, a *Magical Girl*!”

The two girls kept the pose for a few seconds, then broke the pose at the same time, then shook each other’s hands, smiling.

Are they going to do this all the time?

At least don’t do it in front of a bunch of other people.

“Ah! Thank you all for coming, Pon!”

A voice from somewhere. Shadow Gale’s Magical Phone? She didn’t recognize that voice at all.

It didn’t sound human. It sounded childlike and high-pitched.

When she took out her phone, she saw a strange black and white creature, projected stereoscopically from every other Magical Girl’s phones.

“Today is the Log-Out period, Pon! You guys get to log out at the same time, Pon! 3 days in real life have passed, Pon!”

The black and white creature spun around, dropping sparkling glitters everywhere, that disappeared just as fast.

“When you log out, you’ll be able to log back in after a 3-day maintenance period, Pon! In the meantime, events will happen! Whether or not they’re lucky or unlucky events is random, Pon!”

The creature fluttered around.

“Today’s event is pretty lucky, Pon! You all know where the Grassland Area Town is, right? Well, the first one to reach that area gets a special item from me, Fal, Pon! Are you all ready?”

The Magical Girls looked at each other, preparing to race.

“Ready… set… go!”

A large explosive blast came from Pfle's wheelchair. Before they knew it, there was a huge dust cloud, and Pfle had already been long gone.

There wasn't even any point anymore.

The prize for arriving was given to Pfle.

The item in question was a small golden coin. It's about the size of a 500 Yen coin. Not exactly that magnificent.

Instead of numbers, it had a star carved into it.

Though it did shine like it was made of gold.

"This is a *Miracle Coin*, Pon!"

"Interesting. What does it do?" asked Pfle.

"This increases the drop rate of enemies!"

"Drop rate? So, more candies?"

"Nope, some enemies drop super rare items, but have a very low chance of doing that. With this coin equipped, they'll have their drop chance increased 5 times, Pon!"

Immediately, without hesitation, Pfle transferred the *Miracle Coin* from her Magical Phone to Masked Wonder.

Shadow Gale raised her eyebrow.

"You're sure about this?"

Pfle nodded.

"Masked Wonder has more chances of dealing the final killing blow to most of the monsters, so this is a good move."

Masked Wonder, hearing this, smiled.

She then raised her right arm, folded her left, bent her right knee, and extended her left one.

A *Victory Pose*.

"I won't let you down! I'll get those rare items, or my name isn't… *Masked Wonder*!"

Master's Side
Part 2

"What do you mean, Pon? Did Fal mishear you, Pon?"

Within this room, were several monitors.

In each monitor, were cameras, labeled *Magical Girl Raising Project*. The cameras were fixed at an angle, and were recording various different areas.

Wasteland Area

Grassland Area

Town Areas

Several other monitors lined the room, not yet recording. The front, side, floor, and ceiling.

A girl in the room held a Rubik's cube. Unlike a normal Rubik's Cube, this one continued to turn at regular intervals as she balanced it on her index finger.

"You made no mistake"

She put her glasses on the table, her Magical Phone was placed horizontally on the table.

A 3-dimensional image was projected from her phone, illuminating the dust in her room.

The sanitary conditions of this room were very low.

The image of Fal was distorted.

"What you said and what really happened was different, Pon. We should keep quiet about the dead, Pon. Damage taken from the game feeds back into reality."

"The game concept hasn't changed. Nothing's changed."

"If they really knew what the game was about, they wouldn't have participated, Pon"

“Participation is mandatory. Besides, they have a motivation to win.”

“The *Land of Magic* will not keep quiet about this, Pon.”

Fal’s high pitched voice changed. It became very low, like an adult male. Threatening.

The girl kept her eyes on the Rubik’s Cube, not at all threatened by Fal.

“I have not reported anything. None of the players are able to report anything. You are my mascot character. You can’t disobey your Master.”

“What are you playing at, Pon? Some kind of joke, Pon? You better think twice before doing it with me, Pon!”

“This is no joke. I assure you. These *children* will be taken care of, not by the *Land of Magic*, of course.”

“Master’s concern is understandable, even I admit that. However, what exactly is your plan, Pon?”

“I just need to show these children some proof. Then, I will become the righteous Magical Girl. They will see, soon enough.”

She played with her Rubik’s cube, and it continued to spin and turn.

Chapter 3:
The Detective and the Murder

☆Detick Bell

Detick Bell is a detective.

She had a cape, and a detective’s cap. She had a coat, and a tweed-patterned shirt as well.

She even had a prop pipe and a magnifying glass.

Truly, she looked like the public image of Sherlock Holmes himself.

But Detick Bell wasn't just a detective as a Magical Girl. No, this certainly wasn't just any costume to her.

Shinobu Hioka was a detective even before she became the Magical Girl known as Detick Bell.

She had brother, 4 years older than her. She also lived with her father.

One day, when she was young, around kindergarten, she had a school trip to the farm. Of course, this is a field trip to learn about life in the farmlands.

She boarded the bus, generally a loner of a girl, and did all the field trip style work.

After the tiring trip to the farm, she boarded the bus again, and that is when a fateful encounter happened.

While the other kids were asleep, Shinobu picked up a TV Menu, being the only one awake. She was curious as to what Anime was airing at that moment.

Then, she turned on the bus TV, and switched channels to that Anime.

The Anime was about a child detective. A boy who was very clever and had amazing intellectual skills.

Shinobu was very impressed with this boy. He had used words that she had never heard before, certainly not something normal kids would hear.

Then, the boy solved a *murder*. That was something that impressed Shinobu. Not only that, but he found the culprit! An adult!

A kid can outwit an adult? Shinobu wanted to be as smart as him.

By the time the bus ride was over, Shinobu became a big fan of this boy detective.

She asked her brother's friend for any Manga related to the boy detective, and she spent most of her kindergarten years reading it.

Luckily, there were some Furigana, so she could understand the writings even though she was still young.

Alibi.

Trick.

Locked Room Mystery.

These phrases and words fascinated Shinobu.

Soon, she began to rent DVDs of the boy detective. She begged her father to buy them.

Anime and Movies of the boy detective. All of them collected by Shinobu.

Eventually, when she ran out of media for that boy detective, she looked to other mystery stories.

She began to collect books. Mystery books. Over time, her do-it-yourself coloring books were replaced with murder mysteries and detective fiction.

Most of the mystery books she had weren't even aimed for kids, they were mostly adult detective novels. However, she insisted on reading them still.

In a time when most children were engrossed in animation, or special effects shows, or action shows, Shinobu was engrossed in mystery novels.

From elementary school, to junior high, to high school.

In high school, Shinobu became the president of the Mystery Club. A club dedicated to discussing mystery novels and solving actual mysteries at school.

At the school play, Shinobu organized a play, based on an adaptation of a famous mystery novel, *Yatsuhaka-Mura*.

Of course, Shinobu would play the part of the famous Japanese detective, *Kousuke Kindaichi*.

During that play, the teachers would scold her for designing a play with lots of gore and blood involved.

However, the audience, which included parents and adults, loudly clapped at her performance *and* the show.

The feeling of satisfaction washed over Shinobu.

This strengthened her resolve to become a detective. Even if her father was against the idea.

3 years after graduating college, she opened her own Private Investigation firm.

After that, she had received a message about a Magical Girl selection test.

At first, she didn't think much of it, but then, she remembered her first transformation.

The first thing she noticed when she looked in the mirror. Her facial features, all of them had become beautiful.

Shinobu wasn't the type to care about beauty and cuteness, but when she looked at herself in the mirror, her heartbeats became fast.

She pinched her cheek to test if she was dreaming.

This was real.

This was real.

She was a real Magical Girl.

Detick Bell's costume was a detective. Exactly what she hoped for.

Not only that, her costume wasn't too out there, she could easily wear this in real life without being caught.

This means she can easily work undercover within humans.

Because she was a Magical Girl, her physical abilities far surpassed any normal human being.

She was able to work days without sleep or rest.

Her eyes adjusted to the darkness of the night, and she could see it as clear as day.

Suitable for any detective.

Not only that, but her Magical Skill is also quite useful for solving crimes.

However, one thing that always bothered her was the reality of being a detective. Unlike the shows she watched, most of her work has mostly been either spying on people, finding missing items, or basic chores.

None of them involved solving murders or crimes.

Still, she never let that get in her way.

'*I will become a detective*'.

Even if reality isn't the same as her fantasies, her dream was still there.

The Magical Girl known as *Magical Daisy* has dropped out of the game.

She delivered a deathblow to the monster, her *Daisy Beam*.

Her enemy, the *Powered Skeleton*. Its characteristics, *Reflect long-range attacks*.

One hit death blow. This is what she had heard from her party members.

Bell had visited the scene of the crime. No mistaking it. From the look of Daisy's corpse, there's no room for murder.

All the evidence indicates an accident.

When Bell logged out of the game, she claimed to her investigation firm Director that she was taking an extended 3-day vacation.

The Director yelled at her over the phone, and she closed it.

While she regretted it, it's not like she can do anything about this problem.

Now to solve a case.

Firstly, she searched using her Magical Phone.

'*Magical Daisy*'.

Results usually pointed to the Anime called *Magical Daisy*.

Based on the information retrieved from that site and Yumenoshima Genopsycho, *Magical Daisy* had been airing for quite a long time ago.

It was also based on the actual Magical Daisy.

The show stopped sometime a few years back, with only reruns happening.

It's not a lot of information, but it's something.

She transformed into Detick Bell and went out into the city. There's an investigation that needed to be done.

She went northeast to the nearest train station, transferred to a private railway, made 3 transits, and finally made it to her destination.

B-City.

When she exited the station, she waited until no one's around.

She looked around left and right, and finally, when she's absolutely certain that no one is watching her, she went over to a wall in the station, and she gave a light kiss to it.

From the cracks and soot of the wall, it slowly but surely became the shape of a face.

Eyes, a nose, a mouth. It looked like a strange caricature of a human face that you'd see in an Anime or a Manga.

The face looked like a middle-aged man, but the face itself was on the wall.

Of course, each building that she does this to has a different face and personality, and Bell can't exactly choose it.

This station is old, and rarely used. Of course the face that it produced would be that of a middle-aged man.

The size of the face was about a few meters in height. It saw Detick Bell, and had its eyes locked on to her.

“Are you looking for something?” it asked her.

“Do you know someone by the name of Magical Daisy?”

“No, I can’t say that I do.”

Detick Bell pulled out her Magical Phone and showed the face a picture of Magical Daisy.

“This girl. Know her?”

“Ah, her. Yes, I do. She tends to help people in this station.”

“Gotcha, thanks”

Once again, Bell gave a light kiss to the ‘nose’ of the face, and the face melted into the walls, becoming just a normal wall again.

This was Detick Bell’s Magical Skill.

‘*The ability to talk to buildings*’.

However, to be able to talk, they must be given a way to communicate. All she has to do is give a kiss to part of the building, and a face will materialize there.

Incidentally, she had tried to talk to the buildings when she was inside that game. The fallen buildings in the Wasteland Area.

Her Magical Skill still worked of course, but the buildings there were uncooperative.

“I cannot say anything that my Master does not allow me to say. Please look at your in-game hint system” is what most of them said.

Bell had thought she might be able to find a shortcut out of the game, but no such luck it seems.

Still, now she knows the general area of where Magical Daisy lived. The next step is to pinpoint it.

According to information gained from Nokko-Chan, Magical Daisy became a Magical Girl in junior high. That’s also the time her Anime series was aired. If that was the case, Bell could

calculate Magical Daisy's age, and maybe figure out where she is now.

Magical Girl activities are usually intense, so most Magical Girls don't do it too far away from home.

There must be some way for Daisy to change back into human form. She must live somewhere in these buildings.

Detick Bell bought a local newspaper, unfolded it, and sat on a park bench.

Magical Daisy must be able to transform back, perhaps if not in her own house, in some alleyways.

Of course, she'd worry about catching the eyes of humans, but she wouldn't care about transforming in front of a building.

So, it should be simple enough to investigate most buildings that have alleyways in them. Hopefully they'll remember Magical Daisy's face, and they can lead Detick Bell right to her.

The purpose of this investigation is simple.

Although Magical Daisy may have died in the game, according to Fal, since it's a virtual game, it shouldn't reflect to reality.

So, in theory, Magical Daisy should be alive.

But Bell couldn't help but feel like something's wrong, so she *has* to make sure.

She folded the newspaper and got up from the bench.

3 days before log-in period. She has 3 days.

☆Pechika

Once again, Pechika went to the park.

Before, she was very confident. She had been pleased and happy and proud of herself when she last came to this park.

Now, it's dusk, and all she felt was depression and sadness.

She'd spent most of the day in her bed, watching the clock.

Now, she was in the park, alone. No children about, sitting on a swingset.

Fal had explained the log-out period, and logging back in, and she can't stop thinking about the game.

Apparently one Magical Girl had already dropped out. Was that possible? Is that actually a possible thing to do?

But then she thought about her party members.

Fal did say that nothing that happens in the game will affect your real body. But pain still hurts in the game itself.

She should know, she's been choked, kicked, and punched.

What if she died in the game? Dying hurts, right? Or would it feel painless?
The thought scared her.

"Excuse me!"

She heard a voice coming from the distance.

She'd lost track of time. It's already getting dark. Pechika's shadow was lengthening.

In the distance, she heard footsteps running towards her. She saw a boy in a baseball jersey.

Ninomiya-Kun?

"Excuse me, um… you're the girl, right?"

Pechika stood up from the swing.

Her heart was beating fast.

Sweating.

Heat.

Was this what it was like to have a crush on someone?

Ninomiya-Kun smiled at her.

“You’re the girl that gave us lunch, right?”

Pechika nodded rapidly.

“I just wanted to say… That was amazing! Did you make it yourself?”

Technically yes, although the reason it’s so delicious is because of Pechika’s Magical Skill.

Pechika can cook, though.

It’s just, she didn’t want to take any risks.

But let’s not tell him that.

Pechika simply nodded furiously.

“Wow, that’s great! Listen… The team really loved it, and I thought it was delicious, so maybe… if you ever wanna make us something, we’d be happy to have you, y’know?”

Pechika gasped.

“Oh, I’m sorry… That must’ve sounded pretty rude. You don’t have to, if you don’t want to”

Suddenly Ninomiya-Kun bowed his head.

He bowed his head!

Pechika tried to speak.

“N-no, it’s okay… I love cooking!” she replied.

Ninomiya-Kun looked up at her face and smiled.

“Really!? That’s great! Your food’s amazing! Very delicious! Haha, sorry about coming all this way.”

“I-it’s fine… Thank you!”

Ninomiya-Kun nodded, and shook Pechika’s hand.

He’s shaking her hand!?

After that, he smiled, and bowed for a bit, then he walked away after saying his farewells.

Pechika sat back down on the swing. The cold, metal, swingset.

Her heartbeat calmed down, her sweating stopped.

Even though she was calm on the outside, she was still burning on the inside. She was happy.

But maybe, her Magical Skill might be useful after all.

Maybe there’s a way for her to contribute to her team.

After all, moods are an important factor of team morale.

Yes, the path seemed open to Pechika now. She had a plan.

☆Shadow Gale

Several years ago, the Hitokouji family had been hit with a horrible chronic disease.

This disease affected an the eyes and legs of the individual, rendering them physically incapable of many things.

It manifested at an early age, and would continue on until they are old.

Kanoe’s grandfather has it, and Kanoe has it too.

This would cause her grandfather to be confined to a wheelchair near the end of his life.

Although physically, he was rather incapable. Mentally, Kanoe’s grandfather was a very incredible man.

Human Resources.

Investments.

Trade Deals.

Rigging Bids.

Precise calculations and multitasking was something that Kanoe's grandfather had all the time in
the world for, since he can't physically do much anymore.

However, perhaps due to his famous and rich status, there were many horrible rumors that plagued him.

For example, the rumor that he had over 80 illegitimate children.

Whether or not these rumors were true, Kanoe's grandfather continued to work energetically.

In the end, he died of a stroke, and the rumors never even stopped.

It continued to plague the Hitokouji family.

Kanoe never paid much attention to those. She simply focused on what's next in life.

When Mamori hears Kanoe talk, she can hear the same tone of voice that Kanoe's grandfather uses.

Kanoe is truly growing up to be like him.

When the disease began to hit Kanoe, it was around the time when she became a Magical Girl as well.

She designed a golden regal outfit for herself. She wanted also a wheelchair that emphasized elegance and beauty.

Her wheelchair was like a throne.

Her eye, which has been hit by the disease, was covered up in an elegant eyepatch.

A wood carving of a bird.

Her grandfather loved birds. He kept a lot of them nearby. That was the reason why Kanoe's eyepatch was a bird.

Kanoe's way of life also reflected her grandfathers.

She never hesitates when giving an answer, and always seems to know the right words to say.

She had many admirers in school. She had many who wanted to become close friends with her.

She would often socialize with many people as well.

However, today, at school. Just after lunch, Kanoe was alone in the science lab.

Well, she wasn't really alone.

As always, Mamori was beside her.

Kanoe was lost in thought, staring through the window of the school.

Mamori couldn't help but be concerned. She was obviously still thinking about the game.

Usually, Kanoe would be socializing or doing something productive at this point.

"If you're having any trouble, you know I'm more than happy to talk to you right?"

"Are you a mind reader now, Mamori?"

"We've known each other since children. I know that face when I see it."

Looking outside, Mamori could see the rest of the students energetically playing soccer. Kids were chasing the ball, and it was a sunny summer day.

A hot summer day. Mamori took off her scarf and grabbed a chair. She sat next to Kanoe.

Kanoe was silent for a moment.

Then she spoke.

"…I know it's just a game, but…"

Just as Mamori thought, it was about that game.

"…We collected an item. *I* collected an item that gave us… an extreme advantage. It's so extreme that we may as well be dooming the other players. In a way, isn't that… cheating?"

Mamori chuckled.

"Is that what you're worried about? My lady, you shouldn't worry about things like that. We didn't cheat, we did our best to win"

Kanoe lifted her legs on her wheelchair and wrapped her arms around it.

"…It's disgraceful"

Kanoe looked nervous.

Mamori smiled.

"There are two types of Magical Girls…"

"…Those that fight, and those that are unable to fight. I know, Mamori"

"That game was meant for Magical Girls who are willing to fight. The ones that can't, they have to find other ways to win."

"I cannot fight, Mamori. We both know this. Does that justify what I'm doing?"

"That's why I'm here to fight for you. We're not doing anything wrong. We're just looking out for
each other. There are other Magical Girls who are unable to fight. That's why we all grouped up."

"I wonder why they participated in the game. Could it be the reward? Opening an area rewards them greatly. Even just participating gives you money"

"Perhaps, it's possible"

"Not one person has rejected Fal's invitation to play"

“Wait… no one?”

“Not that I know of”

“That’s… strange. Is it mandatory?”

Hearing the question, Kanoe began to question it herself.

“If there were a select number of people that must play, then there has to be some kind of connection between those people.”

“Any reason they picked you, my lady?”

“I’m not sure. It’s certainly not based on strength. However, there must be *some* connection between all of us, if this is indeed a mandatory test.”

Perhaps there was some connection, but they’re just not looking in the right places.

Would strength really matter, though?

Your five senses are altered once you enter the game. A virtual reality that completely dictates how you see the world.

Pain was still felt, though.

But damage shouldn’t be transferred to your real body, at least that’s what the game said.

However, you would still feel pain, so…

Kanoe further raised her knees upwards. With that pose, she might actually fall off her wheelchair.

Mamori was worried.

“Careful, you’ll fall”

“Mhmm, I know”

It’s clear Kanoe had other things on her mind.

“Mamori, the Magical Phones. They weren’t working in the game.”

“What do you mean?”

“We couldn’t contact anyone outside the game, and we can’t contact the *Land of Magic* either.”

Kanoe’s right.

Even when Mamori wanted to use her Magical Skill on the phones, it didn’t do anything. There was some kind of safeguard that prevented it.

They had thought that their Magical Phones were broken or busted.

Suddenly, Kanoe’s feet returned to the ground. No longer in any danger.

Mamori was relieved.

Outside, the soccer game was finishing up. When the kids scored their last goal, cheers were heard from the outside.

The loudness made Mamori frown a bit.

Time to get back to the normal life.

Three days later, the Magical Girls all logged back into the game.

The surrounding area was brown and filled with abandoned buildings.

The smell was the same as well. There’s no doubt about it.

They’re back where they came from.

First thing she had to do was open her map. Get a hold on the positions of the Party Members.

She had to get to Pfle first.

Shadow Gale ran as fast as she can, using her enhanced speed to reach Pfle. Finally, they met up.

“You made me wait, Shadow Gale”

“Sorry. Off we go?”

“Masked Wonder hasn’t arrived yet. Is she nearby?”

“I have her on my map.”

Shadow Gale and Pfle left as fast as they could. Pfle followed Shadow Gale’s lead.

While Shadow Gale watched her map, she noticed that Masked Wonder’s icon hasn’t moved at all.

It’s possible that she’s still socializing with someone.

When they arrived at the location, they found Masked Wonder on the ground, lying face down.

Shadow Gale was confused. She tried to help her up, then she noticed that Masked Wonder’s hand was cold.

A dark liquid covered most of her cape. Reddish-black.

It had spread through the entire ground.

The source of the dark liquid was the back of Masked Wonder’s head.

There, a crushed stone rock that had traces of the liquid was thrown into the corner of the room.

Pfle slowly approached Masked Wonder, her wheelchair’s wheels stained with the puddle of blood.

She took Masked Wonder’s Magical Phone. Turned on the power, and checked the status.

“Items, candies. They’re all gone”

She spoke in a somber tone.

Shadow Gale felt nausea building up inside of her.

☆Pechika

A *Pot* popped in Pechika's hand.

The shops in each town were quite different in variation.

In the Wasteland Shop, they found many Health Potions.

In the Mountains Shop, there were a lot of Picture Books.

Weapons and Armor exist in every shop, but with slight variations.

Further areas award them with stronger weapons and armor.

They're always named as '*Weapon*' and '*Shield*'.

In the Grassland Shop, they were called '*Weapon +1*' and '*Shield +1*'.

Mountain Shop, '*Weapon +2*' and '*Shield +2*'.

Seems like this is a pattern.

However, as soon as you purchase these weapons and shields, their forms and names will change depending on the Magical Girl.

For Pechika, the weapons became a spatula.

Leonetta's weapons are claws.

Leonetta had no problem adjusting to her claws at all.

Then there was the random items. '*R*'.

The first time they pressed it, they received a *Map*. They were very grateful. Considering the next time they pressed it, they'd have to pay 100 candies.

They pressed it again, and another *Map* was given.

Third time, *Map*.

Fourth time, *Map*.

Was this some kind of joke?

Leonetta pressed the *Support* button. Fal appeared before them.

“What the hell is this, Fal? Is this button *actually* random? We got *FOUR* maps.”

Fal, without losing a beat, calmly answered.

“Maps have a high chance of being selected, Pon! It’s common to get 5 in a row. Don’t be discouraged, Pon! If you keep doing it, you’ll get a *Super Rare* item for sure, Pon!”

Leonetta opened the shop menu. She saw the items listed in the Mountain Shop.

Maps cost 3 candies.

A waste of using the ‘*R*’ method.

However, the items in the Mountain Shop haven’t been purchased by Team Clantail yet, because
they had a plan.

Miyokata had shared her Magical Candies with Clantail.

Pechika did so as well.

They were going to pool all of their candies together for something big.

Clantail had a spear at her right hand. Her weapon. She had received all the candies she needed, except for one player.

Leonetta hesitated.

Finally, she nodded.

1000 candies.

They purchased ‘*R*’ 10 times.

8 *Maps*.

1 *Shovel*.

1 *Pot*.

A *Pot* popped in Pechika's hand.

That is how she received a *Pot*.

The shovel is about 1 meter in length.

There doesn't seem to be any magical qualities to them. They really do look like a regular pot and shovel.

Leonetta screamed in anger.

"Dammit! That was such a stupid thing to do! Fuck! 1000… *One… Thousand*… All gone! Shit! Dammit! Idiots! Argh!"

Miyokata also began arguing with Leonetta again.

Clantail did a stare that made the two quiet, but it certainly didn't change Leonetta's bad mood.

To prevent this, Clantail decided to split up the team into Combat and Scouting teams once again.

Miyokata's mood lightened up as soon as she was alone with Pechika.

During their scouting, they encountered an enemy. While Pechika ran off to avoid fighting, Miyokata was left to handle it.

It was apparently a small demonic creature, dragonlike, and aggressive.

It lunged at Miyokata, but then it stopped.

It gave a small look at Miyokata, and Miyokata merely smiled at it, and before you knew it, Miyokata had successfully gotten it to become attached to her.

It looked like such a cute little creature, with a ribbon tied along its neck. Courtesy of Miyokata.

It had become emotionally attached to Miyokata, which just made her mood a lot better.

She began to carry it everywhere, and smiled as she walked.

That night, they merged back with the Combat team.

Leonetta's mood had gotten worse.

As Clantail sat down, clearly annoyed at their mission, Leonetta looked at Clantail face-to-face.

"Okay… I want answers. Now. What the hell was that back there, huh?"

Leonetta's anger rushed out, pointed at Clantail.

"Why are we letting that gigantic rat tell us what to do!?"

Before, they had encountered a Magical Girl, a giant one, that told them not to enter their hunting grounds.

Now, in the Mountain Area, they encountered her again.

Seems to be unavoidable at this point.

Leonetta didn't like it.

She only then noticed the small creature on Miyokata's shoulder, hissing at Leonetta.

Leonetta hissed back at it.

"You two stop right now!" yelled Clantail.

With 3 Magical Girls being quiet, all eyes suddenly pointed to Pechika, who was doing a very strange thing.

She's putting both her hands in the pot.

"Pechika… What are you doing?"

"Eh? Huh? Oh… hehe… I'm cooking!"

Suddenly all traces of hostility between Leonetta and Miyokata were replaced with curiosity.

Even Clantail was a bit confused.

“Cooking? With no fire? What food?”

“Ah! Uh, this is uh… A special kind of cooking! And it’s the Preserved Food!”

“You’re… cooking the food that’s already been cooked?”

“Maybe cooking is the wrong word. I’m… modifying it,” said Pechika with a smile.

Again, the 3 Magical Girls were confused.

“Do you guys remember when I explained my Magical Skill? I can make anything delicious and edible. I just have to hold it for 5 minutes. Don’t worry… in a few more minutes, this canned meat… it’ll be the greatest thing you’ll eat in your life!”

The other 3 Magical Girls were silent. Curious, slightly shocked, slightly confused.

“Oh, uh, guys. I can make food, but I can’t make cutlery. Since we don’t have any plates or forks or spoons, I hope the leaves I collected will be fine… sorry!” said Pechika sheepishly.

“Ah! A leaf! In some cultures, that is to be expected! It is good plate for food, hahaha!”

Miyokata laughed, and her small demonic pet laughed along with its master.

Leonetta scoffed, folded her arms, and sat on a nearby rock.

Pechika finished up her cooking. Truthfully, if she wanted, she could make a highly elaborate dish that would look beautiful and be more delicious than anything in the world.

For now though, with only giant leaves as plates, she settled for something more simple, but still
delicious!

She prepared 4 packs of food. One for her, 3 for the others.

When she shared them around, Leonetta opened the leaf wrap and raised her eyebrows when she looked at the food.

“…Rice balls? You expect me to think rice balls are the most delicious thing I’ll ever eat? Even

preserved food is better than this!”

Pechika only smiled. She was confident.

“You haven’t tried it yet! Go ahead!”

The other two Magical Girls looked at Leonetta.

With the two staring at her, Leonetta became a bit nervous, then scowled.

“Alright, alright…”

She placed it towards her mouth, and ate tiny bits.

One bite.

Two bites.

Munch munch munch…

She didn’t exactly comment, but her eyes widened.

She didn’t want to say it directly, but she continued eating more bits and pieces, even greedier than before.

Pechika chuckled.

Miyokata ate a bite of the rice ball.

“Oh! Mmm… This is good!”

The little demonic creature, watching its master eat, also munched on the rice ball while smiling.

Clantail grabbed a rice ball, and while eating, continued her calm demeanor, closing her eyes while elegantly eating her rice ball.

However, Pechika saw Clantail’s tail. Her tail was wagging rapidly, something that Clantail can’t artificially hide.

This was what Pechika had wanted to be. A good member of the team.

She doesn't have to fight to do that. She just has to be able to hold the team together. Their moral center. Their glue.

Just a few seconds ago, Leonetta and Miyokata had been arguing. Now, Leonetta is eating furiously, smiling as she did, and Miyokata as well, with her new pet.

Even Clantail, who has been stressed this whole time, is actually enjoying the food, even if she tries to hide it with her sophisticated demeanor.

Pechika had once done this, a long time ago.

She wanted everybody to get along, and so she cooked the most delicious food she could think of.

She can't exactly remember the circumstances, but she knew that this was what she was good at.

She may not be able to fight, but she'll always be there for her team.

☆Nokko-Chan

Manabegawa Elementary School, 4th grade, are having an athletics meetup.

Every class had to make a united effort to perform well in these kinds of events.

Failure would mean the ridicule of the whole district, not to mention some sneering and jeering from the students.

If they succeed, however, there's cheers coming from all around.

Bullying

Gossiping

Junio-Senior conflicts

Gender-based conflicts

None of those existed in Manabegawa Elementary.

It was the perfect school. Known as the nicest school in the district.

Even their teacher was perfect.

Mr. Noguchi, the new 4th grade homeroom teacher. Previously, he had taught 6th grade. During
that time, many 6th graders would ditch class.

Mostly because Mr. Noguchi had a really short temper.

He earned the nickname of ‘square timebomb’. Mostly because his face was rather on the square side, and he’d always explode into anger at the smallest mistake.

But, when he transferred to 4th grade, he somehow changed.

He became a bright and fun teacher, who never lost his temper, and smiled almost every day.

In fact, it seems like the 4th graders always seem to be the nicest kids in the whole school.

The atmosphere around them always felt nice.

No one ever became angry.

Everyone was always very happy.

Not many outsiders knew the real reason. Some people said it was because the kids were generally good-natured that it was contagious.

The true reason was one student in particular.

Noriko Nohara.

Whenever a kid would become cranky, she would approach them, calm them down, and suddenly, that kid would become alright and happy again.

Sadness.

Envy.

Anger.

Bad moods.

Everything disappeared in the presence of Noriko.

She had controlled it all to become a bright and cheerful class.

She had affected everyone's emotions to be positive.

She had used her Magical Skill to do this, for in reality, Noriko Nohara was the Magical Girl known as *Nokko-Chan*.

Due to the fact that her powers aren't visible, she was able to use them without anyone discovering her identity.

Nokko-Chan was one of the most experienced Magical Girls in the world.

Most Magical Girls haven't been Magical Girls for as long as her.

Nokko-Chan had been a Magical Girl since she was 4 years old.

Now, it's been 6 years since then. 6 years to hone her powers and training.

Nokko-Chan had been able to use her powers in public and control her powers since then.

According to the rules of the *Land of Magic*, no normal humans should learn that you are a Magical Girl.

Nokko-Chan had followed this rule, like every other Magical Girl that kept their position.

Other Magical Girls can't use their powers directly, but Nokko-Chan's special abilities are something she can use without anyone even noticing them.

When Nokko-Chan told Magical Daisy about the origin of her name and Magical Girl career, she was telling the truth.

Nokko-Chan really was naïve and clueless.

But she was 4 years old then.

She’s not as naïve now.

The *Land of Magic* loves their rules.

They have many ways of monitoring Magical Girls. Their monitoring system for Nokko-Chan’s territory was fairly moderate, so to speak.

Nokko-Chan had been assigned a Magical Girl director, a leader, to speak to and report to. That director would also keep watch of Nokko-Chan.

This way, the *Land of Magic* doesn’t have to keep direct contact with Nokko-Chan, but just entrust the director to do it.

Of course, the director herself has to decide what to report back to the Land of Magic.

Nokko-Chan had always tried to better the lives of the people around her using her Magical Skill secretly.

After-school, Nokko-Chan would visit her mother, who was hospitalized.

That always weighed in her mind. Her mother had been in the hospital for a long time.

After the visit, Nokko-Chan would go back home and spend the rest of her day doing housework.

Nokko-Chan’s Magical Skill isn’t a direct influence on people.

‘*The ability to influence emotions*’.

She can make someone feel happy and fun, but she can’t exactly tell them what to do. In a way, it’s an indirect mind manipulating magic.

Nokko-Chan had to be careful on who she uses it on, but she always looked out for the best possible outcome.

Since she knew her classmates well, she can trust herself to use her Magical Skill on her classmates.

Her director was very lenient on that. She just let Nokko-Chan do whatever she wanted, so long as it’s not bad.

In short, Nokko-Chan's life was this.

Go to school, make sure everything in school is perfect.

Afterwards, visit mom. Make sure she's doing healthy and okay in the hospital.

Then, she would go home and do the rest of the housework before sleeping.

It was hard work, but it was life.

Then everything changed, half a year ago.

An incident happened that caused widespread chaos throughout the Land of Magic.
Nokko-Chan didn't exactly know the details, but it was a huge scandal.

A rogue Magical Girl.

Several directors, and other Magical Girls were fired and decommissioned.

This included Nokko-Chan's director.

Nokko-Chan had asked the reason why her director was permanently fired.

The answer that she received was that her director was a sympathizer of the rogue Magical Girl that caused this whole scandal.

Nokko-Chan had received a new director. Stricter than the one before.

This one demanded that Nokko-Chan also helped other people rather than just her school, as other Magical Girls also do.

The director called Nokko-Chan's use of her powers selfish, as she only used it on people she cared about.

Now she had to worry about all her regular stuff, *and* find normal people to use her powers on, which could be very dangerous.

Now, she was in this game as well.

She didn't care about the game itself, but the reward was something she wanted.

1 Billion Yen for winning the game means that she could probably afford the medication required to heal her mother.

Nokko-Chan looked at her notes.

For clearing an area, they'll be able to get 1 Million Yen.

Genopsycho's head bobbed out of the gigantic lava pool. Her visor was down, and she raised her
arm, holding a key.

"Got it! I have the key! Hehe!"

"Yumenoshima! We had thought you melted when you dived in there, Ru!"

"Naw, I'm good, Nyan Nyan! My suit's invincible remember? Even if the big bang happened, I'd still be standing" said Genopsycho while tapping on her visor.

They had arrived to complete an Area Clear quest. The key to unlock the next gate had been located underneath a pool of lava.

Genopsycho immediately put down her visor, dived in, and grabbed it.

What she said was also true. Nowhere were there any signs of her suit melted or burnt.

Not even Genopsycho was hurt.

She jumped up to the rest of the team, flicked off any lava in her suit, showed the key, and smiled.

"One gate opening key, ready! One million Yen, here we go!"

When the party had first arrived in the Mountain Area, they encountered some enemies.

Javelins and small bows, herds of small demonic looking creatures, with small shields and some

leather armor.

They were smarter than most of the skeletons. For one thing, they had brains, at least that's what Nokko-Chan assumes, since they're all living creatures.

Of course, they're still nothing for the Magical Girls.

Their strength is about 1/10th of what it would take to even scratch a Magical Girl.

Genopsycho and @NyanNyan easily took care of them. Nokko-Chan did her part as well.

Fighting them was different than the skeletons though.

With the skeletons, she knew they were just bones being stuck together and brought to life.

With these things, they somehow had actual biological parts.

When Nokko-Chan hit them with a mop, their heads would crack, and their skulls would break.

Juts of bones would stick out, and blood would gush out of every opening.

Even though they're NPCs, the sensation felt… a little too real.

It was unnerving to Nokko-Chan, it was very unnerving. It's as if she was actually killing an actual
living being.

Magical Daisy's death still lingered in Nokko-Chan's memory.

She looked over at Genopsycho and @NyanNyan. They were easily taking out the demonic creatures.

These corpses would disappear in about 2 hours. It's only part of the game.

However, the memory of Daisy's death made Nokko-Chan uneasy about killing anything that resembled living creatures.

No.

This can't stop her. These creatures are only NPCs. If they don't fight them, they will die.

Not only Nokko-Chan, but Genopsycho and @NyanNyan still remembers Magical Daisy's death.

But that doesn't mean they have to feel depressed about it.

Nokko-Chan is the master of self-deception.

Influencing feelings is her forte.

After defeating many of the monsters, Genopsycho and @NyanNyan shared a high five.

They were happy.

They should feel happy.

They shouldn't feel depressed or sad that Magical Daisy is gone.

That was all a big accident. It wasn't their fault. It wasn't anyone's fault.

Nokko-Chan couldn't escape that feeling of dread, but these two can. These two deserve to feel happy.

When these three fought the enemies, they were more careful. They purchased a *Monster Picture Book*, and always researched on any enemies up ahead.

They can't take any chances like last time. No risks. No deaths.

A flash of memory passes through Nokko-Chan.

Magical Daisy's corpse.

She remembered how she laid there, eyes open, a hole in her stomach, blood everywhere.

She was dead. She was really dead.

Did that really happen?

What happened next was a wave of sadness. After about a few minutes of grieving, they buried Magical Daisy's body in the ground.

They marked it with a gravestone.

Nokko-Chan cried. Everyone cried.

She hugged the two older Magical Girls.

Magical Daisy was dead.

But there was hope…

…That's right, this was a virtual game, right? No one should be hurt in real life. Magical Daisy should be alive in real life…

…right?

Nokko-Chan held on to that hope. All of them did.

After that, Nokko-Chan decided that their focus should be on clearing the game.

But how do you get over someone's death so easily?

You can't. The feeling of grief stays with you for a long time. It certainly doesn't disappear in a few days.

That would be the case… if you weren't Nokko-Chan.

At times like this, self-deception is the best power.

Nokko-Chan made the sadness go away. She made everyone happy and excited again.

Their focus was winning the game.

That was all that mattered.

There was no room for negative emotions.

As soon as the mourning was over, the team went straight towards a mountain hut in the Mountain Area.

Inside were some *Ancient Documents*.

The documents themselves were written in very strange writing. Not in any language that they knew about.

So they purchased an app from the Mountain Store

'*Translator*-Kun'

This app allowed translations of any language found in the game.

They had discovered that the text was discussing a ritual of the Mountain People.

The ritual was performed in an altar in front of a great lake of lava. Of course, then, the key would reveal itself.

The ritual required them to dance while balancing a hookah on their head.

The materials for the hookah were very specific, and the team had to search the entire Mountain Area to find them.

Finally, they performed the dance on the temple, and the key made itself known to be within the pool of lava.

Without hesitating, Genopsycho raised her right hand and said,

"Allllrighty! That's my cue!"

With her right hand, she slammed her visor shut, and dived for the lava lake.

And now they had received the key to the next area.

Triumphantly, Genopsycho had showed the key to @NyanNyan and Nokko-Chan.

@NyanNyan's eyes widened.

"G-G-Genopsycho!!! You did it!!! 1 Million Yen, ARU!!!"

"Nyahahaha!!! I ain't afraid of no lava!"

"With one million Yen, I could buy so much liquor, Ru!!!"

"Whoa now! Nyan Nyan, you're going to buy *all* the liquor!? Save some for me! And save the money too! Money's an important resource!"

The two Magical Girls were laughing. Nokko-Chan laughed along too.

This was how it should be.

Genopsycho slapped on @NyanNyan's shoulder playfully.

@NyanNyan replied by hugging her.

They were happy.

Magical Daisy was gone, but nobody was depressed anymore.

This was how things should be.

Nokko-Chan continued to boost their feelings of joy.

@NyanNyan checked her Magical Phone.

"Oh!!! We got candy rewards for completing a quest, Ru!"

"KYAAAA! 500 CANDIES!!!"

They raised their Magical Phones up triumphantly, laughing victoriously as they did.

Nothing could sour their moods. That won't happen.

Then, their Magical Phones rang. It was Fal.

"Attention! This is an emergency contact! All Magical Girls will be transported to the Wasteland City at once, Pon!"

Genopsycho lifted her visor furiously.

"Wait, what!? *Now*!?"

"No, not now… in 1 minute, Pon!"

"But we just got the key!"

"It's an emergency, Pon! Forced teleportation will occur in 1 minute, Pon! Looking forward to seeing you there, Pon!"

Without giving any chance for a rebuttal, Fal disappeared.

“I wonder what’s wrong, Ru?”

“I don’t know, something happened, who knows…”

“I hope it’s nothing bad, Ru”

@NyanNyan became anxious.

Genopsycho became frustrated.

Nokko-Chan recalled that they were having fun just a moment ago. This was troubling…

☆Pechika

It’s been a day since Pechika had cooked for her team, and she had cooked again just recently.

It didn’t take long to cook. Her magic allowed her to take only 5 minutes of her time, and four Preserved Food to cook for the rest of the team.

Leonetta and Miyokata would applaud Pechika. Leonetta in particular had a good mood when eating Pechika’s food.

Clantail would act very neutral, and eat. However, her tail would buzz with excitement whenever she ate.

Pechika thought that was kind of cute.

“You’re an *amazing* cook, Pechika! You are to be commended!” said Miyokata.

“I think I should make you my personal chef,” added Leonetta with a wry smile.

At noon, Fal had approached them, telling them of an emergency meeting. Just a minute afterwards, they were transported to the Wasteland Town.

The view was amazing. So many Magical Girls.

One was leaning on a building, one was sitting by a fountain.

All were waiting on what would transpire.

Of course, Fal was in the middle of the town.

Pechika wondered what it was like to be on other teams. It looked like they had a good relationship and good moods beaming out of each other.

…Except for one team.

For some reason, a Magical Girl dressed as a black nurse looked very… pale.

Her face wasn't happy, and she looked visibly nervous, though she was trying to hide it.

"Well, thank you all for showing up! I'm here to correct a mistake that I made, as well as to make an announcement, Pon!"

Fal had begun.

He spun around, and waited for a bit before he continued.

"As you probably already know, I did tell you before that damage taken in the game wouldn't reflect on your real bodies… That was true, Pon… but there seems to be a slight misunderstanding."

The other Magical Girls looked at each other.

"It's true that *damage* doesn't transfer to real life, but death… If you die in this game, your real body will receive a powerful heart attack, Pon…"

Silence.

No one talked.

Then, a blue Magical Girl spoke up.

"…You're kidding, right?"

"Not joking, Pon. Dying here causes death in real life, Pon. Therefore, please do your best not to

die, Pon! Remember. This game is still a secret. Penalties will be applied if you talk about the deaths to anyone other than the players, Pon."

There was a roar of outrage from the other Magical Girls.

"Stop messing around!"

"Are you being serious?"

"What the hell is this!?"

Fal calmly answered all of their complaints.

"This is a selection test, Pon. The purpose is to find the most ideal Magical Girl. Therefore, if you do your best, you will succeed, Pon. The rewards are still given, so don't worry about all that, Bon."

Repeated yelling.

"That will be all. These decisions come from my Master, Pon. I'm only relaying them to you"

Fal implied that these decisions came from above him, and not from Fal himself.

Even if that were true, Pechika was still afraid.

She was trembling.

She felt light headed.

Her knees were shaking.

Around her, Magical Girls were shouting.

Some were beating the walls of the buildings.

Some tried to grab Fal, to no avail, since he was only a projection.

"I would like to ask a question. Would that be okay?"

Suddenly, a calm voice. Loud, confident, commanding.

The wheelchaired Magical Girl, Pfle.

She had a calm tone, and wasn't panicking in all of this.

The shouting all stopped.

"Of course, Pon."

"You say we get heart attacks if we die in-game. Is it possible to survive it?"

"Of course not, Pon. You're all physically human, even if you're Magical Girls. Heart attacks will kill you, Pon."

"What about reviving. First aid?"

"Impossible, Pon."

"Then answer this, Fal. Do you know why our Magical Phones are malfunctioning? We cannot contact the Land of Magic."

Pfle was right. Not even Pechika could contact the Land of Magic ever since she played this game.

She didn't think much of it, because she had a lot on her mind.

Her life, Ninomiya-Kun, her worries.

But now that Pfle mentioned it…

Fal's eyes blinked.

"Since this is a brand new game in Beta testing, we believed that it would be best to keep the testing secret, even from the Land of Magic, Pon."

"Is that so?" replied Pfle silently.

Pfle extended both of her arms, and in a loud voice, she claimed.

"It appears we have been forced into a game without our consent. The enemy has the means to cut off our resources, and they are more powerful than we thought."

“So… what do we do?” asked a Magical Girl.

“We have been forced into something we do not want. Cut off from the rest of the world. There is no guarantee that we will be released from this game once we accomplish our objective, is there?”

Leonetta, upon hearing this, became frustrated at that thought.

“Do we accept the claims of our enemies? Do we succumb to them? Do we not try to defeat them?”

One by one, the other Magical Girls nodded.

Of course, when they can’t contact the Land of Magic, there will be resistance from these Magical Girls.

A Master that pulls Magical Girls into a forced game would also not be something that Magical Girls would agree to.

One of the Magical Girls nervously spoke up,

“Actually… the rewards that they gave me were real. The money showed up in my account. Maybe they’re telling the truth?”

“About that…” Fal began.

All eyes were on Fal.

All of them were furious eyes. They clearly blamed him for all of this.

“I can tell you this, Pon. Everything that I have said was not a lie. Nothing I say in the future will be a lie, Pon. I’ve only ever hidden the truth, but not lie, Pon. Also, I am at my Master’s mercy, so I do as she commands, Pon.”

“How can we guarantee that you’re telling the truth?”

“You can’t, Pon. You’ll just have to trust me, Pon.”

“Even with no guarantee, he’s right. We’re birds in a cage.”

Pfle said this with every bit of seriousness, which put everyone on edge.

Then, a Magical Girl stepped up in front.

Tweed cap, and a cape to match. She looked like a classic detective.

She went up in front of the whole crowd, and as she stood there, all eyes on her, she spoke.

“My name is Detick Bell. As you can see, I’m a detective.”

Very obviously so.

“A few days ago, I conducted an investigation on a Magical Girl in real life.”

“Bellsie? Who did you investigate?”

The blue Magical Girl asked the detective.

“Magical Daisy,” replied Detick Bell as she closed her eyes in sorrow.

She opened them once more.

“As some of you may know, Magical Daisy had an Anime aired just a few years ago. The Anime was based on her successes as a real Magical Girl. Using some of my powers, and based on the sets of the actual Anime, I was able to find her apartment.”

Murmurs were heard all around Detick Bell.

Detick Bell continued.

“Her apartment had an ambulance parked nearby. They carried her body out. They confirmed it was a heart attack. The time of death was the same time she logged out. This confirms what Fal said. You die in real life if you die in the game.”

So Magical Daisy is really…

…Magical Daisy is dead.

“My point is this… Magical Daisy was a very famous person. She was clearly important to the Land of Magic. Her death might cause suspicion, and this game might be shut down,” concluded

Detick Bell.

Fal shook his body.

“You’re free to believe in what you think might happen, Pon.”

Detick Bell glanced at Fal, and, making no expression, closed her eyes.

“That’s all from me.”

She walked down back towards the crowd of Magical Girls.

The blue Magical Girl approached Detick Bell.

“Wow, Bellsie, you really are a detective!” she said, eyes sparkling.

Did she even understand what’s going on?

The Magical Girls that did understand expressed it in different ways.

Clantail’s tail stopped moving.

Miyokata was playing with her decorations, with a panicked face.

Leonetta was just visibly angry.

Pfle had returned to center stage.

“Well, I have one more thing to say!” she said with a loud voice.

She smiled, glancing at the Magical Girls.

When she glanced at Pechika, Pechika instinctively looked away, partly ashamed, partly nervous.

“I’d like you all to put away your thoughts of money and prizes for just one moment. For a grave
thing has happened. When we logged in, one of our party members, Masked Wonder, was murdered.”

Silence fell.

With the information they just received, they knew that it meant Masked Wonder was dead in real life as well.

“Her items, her candies. All of them were stolen. I ask that the culprit come forward this moment!”

“You’re *lying*!”

Another shout. It came from the blue Magical Girl.

“That’s impossible! Masked Wonder can’t be killed, she’s a hero of justice! She’s… She’s the embodiment of justice itself! She- She can’t… She can’t be dead, she won’t die that easily!”

The blue Magical Girl was holding back tears. Her face was red.

“Masked Wonder was a strong Magical Girl, but she wasn’t the only one. Someone here murdered her. Whoever did it didn’t give her a chance to fight back.”

Pfle’s eyes were a mixture of sadness and rage.

Those words obviously stung the blue Magical Girl, who only fell silent.

She clenched her fist, it shook hard. Her red face showing anger. She closed her eyes and hung her head down.

Tears were streaming down her face. She sniffled and sobbed, but tried to hide it.

Detick Bell approached her from the back. She put her hand on the blue Magical Girl’s shoulder.

The blue Magical Girl hugged Detick Bell, crying on her shoulder. Detick Bell hugged her back.

Leonetta raised her voice,

“How do we know she was murdered by another Magical Girl? Wasn’t Magical Daisy killed by a skeleton?”

“Masked Wonder was killed in the Wasteland Area. A low-level area with skeletons that wouldn’t be able to scratch you if they tried,” replied Pfle.

“That doesn’t excuse anything. The possibility’s still there!”

Pfle nodded.

“Then let us compare her death with Magical Daisy’s. Can anyone in Magical Daisy’s team please raise your hand?”

A small maid, about 10 years old, raised her hand sheepishly.

Pfle smiled.

“Tell us. When Magical Daisy died, what happened to her items and candies?”

The maid stuttered.

“Um… Well… We uh… We decided… We split it up… We all got a fair share… Yeah…”

She seemed nervous.

Afterwards, she hid behind a Magical Girl that dressed like a China doll.

“As you can see, Magical Daisy had her items and candy intact. Being killed doesn’t mean it’s gone. Since Masked Wonder’s items and candies were gone, that means *someone* has stolen it.”

Leonetta, Miyokata, Clantail, and Pechika looked at each other.

None of them believed the others were the culprit.

“If would like the killer to come forward. If they do so, then I will assume that they did not know that killing Masked Wonder would kill her in real life, and whoever the killer is, I will not judge them of that crime, but only if they step forward now!”

Pfle looked around.

No reaction, no response.

Who could the killer be?

When the game login period was activated, they all started in their original locations. Pechika

didn't believe that anyone in her team had enough time to head towards Masked Wonder, kill her, and take her items.

Pechika certainly couldn't do it. Even if she wanted to kill Masked Wonder, she didn't know where Masked Wonder was.

So who had the time and knowledge?

"Nobody is coming forward? Very well…"

Pfle took out her Magical Phone, turned it on, and showed the *items* page.

"Then, we'll do it this way… Everyone show us your Magical Phones! The culprit will be the one that has the *Miracle Coin*. A prize that I had given to Masked Wonder, and a one-of-a-kind item."

Magical Girls around Pfle all widened their eyes in shock.

Clantail shook her head,

"What is this, a witch hunt?"

Pfle nodded,

"Isn't it fitting that we have a witch hunt for the witch within the Magical Girls?"

Clantail scowled at Pfle.

Pfle ignored the scowl and continued,

"I believe that there is a danger amongst all of us. I believe the killer knew about the effects of death, which can only mean that they had received information from one source…"

Pfle looked at Fal,

"…The mastermind. Is that right, Fal? Is there someone amongst us who is a traitor? Is there a wolf hiding with the sheep?"

Fal didn't answer, he only stared at Pfle blankly.

“Fal, you can’t lie, can you? You promised us this,” said Pfle with a smile.

Fal did not speak.

“Then it’s come to this. We have to find the threat hidden within us before it grows larger. I need everyone to cooperate to find this killer among us.”

Clantail walked over to Pfle, and she spat on the ground.

Clantail took out her Magical Phone, and threw it at Pfle.

Pfle caught it with one hand. She opened the phone, and nodded.

“Thank you, it appears you’re clear. If you’d like, you can check mine as well,” said Pfle.

Pfle offered Clantail her Magical Phone as she returned Clantail’s.

Reluctantly accepting, Clantail took a look at Pfle’s item list. Sure enough, no *Miracle Coin*.

“Then… we have no problem?” asked Clantail.

“We have no problem. I need everyone to do this, now!”

Soon, there was a line of Magical Girls, all being examined by Pfle, and all examining Pfle’s Magical Phone just in case.

Pechika noticed that the black nurse Magical Girl also stood by Pfle. A teammate, perhaps?

Soon, almost all the Magical Girls’ phones were checked, and everyone had returned back to their original positions.

Almost everyone had been checked. Almost everyone.

“Last one, step forward then,” urged Pfle.

Pechika saw the Magical Girl being called out. It was that Samurai Magical Girl. There’s no way Pechika could forget her.

Though she killed Pechika’s skeletons, she strangled Pechika when they first met.

“We don’t have all day…” Pfle said strongly.

The Samurai Magical Girl pulled out her Katana.

“Whoa, hold on there!”

A Magical Girl stepped in between Pfle and the Samurai.

She was wearing a skintight suit, with a visor covering her face. Her suit looks like it came straight out of a sci-fi B-movie.

The Samurai Magical Girl stared at the suited Magical Girl.

“Are you a Musician?”

“Huh?”

“I’m looking for a Musician…”

“I mean, I can make music bu-”

The Samurai Magical Girl swung her sword, slashing the air, and a slashed sound could be heard hitting the suited Magical Girl.

The inside of the suit’s visor turned red.

The suited Magical Girl fell forward and collapsed.

Pechika heard a scream.

☆Nokko-Chan

“Calm down!”

Nokko-Chan yelled at @NyanNyan.

“Yumenoshima! Medical care! She needs first aid! Yumenoshima!”

Worried feelings.

Negative feelings.

If @NyanNyan moves now, the Samurai will kill her.

“Calm down!”

Pfle and the Samurai were staring at each other.

Nokko-Chan had no choice.

She unleashed a wave of calm emotion on @NyanNyan.

The sudden emotion conflicted inside @NyanNyan. Nokko-Chan forcefully surged the calmness towards @NyanNyan, and continued to boost it as much as she could.

@NyanNyan’s movements then stopped. She took a deep breath and had a small smile as the calmness overwhelmed her mind.

The Samurai Magical Girl raised her Katana whilst staring towards Pfle.

However, the small bird statue on Pfle’s wheelchair suddenly opened its mouth and unleashed a
beam of light.

Shocked, the Samurai slashed her Katana, and cut the beam of light itself in half.

As she quickly tried to swing her Katana at Pfel, the black nurse tackled the wheelchair and carried it off.

@NyanNyan snapped out of her daze, and engaged the swordsman.

Magical Girls all around Nokko-Chan were now either fighting or running.

Harpoons and arrows filled the skies, aiming for the Samurai.

All of them cut in mid-air without the sword even touching them.

Vertically.

Horizontally.

Diagonally.

The Samurai hasn't moved from her spot, she only swung her sword in place, and projectiles that are meters away are slashed.

Nokko-Chan may be young, but she's a veteran Magical Girl for 6 years. She understood how to analyze the heat of battle.

She ran for the shade of a building.

As she ran, she saw a glimpse of a gigantic sunflower seed thrown towards the Samurai. Like the
rest, it was cut.

Rocks and boulders as well. All of them cut up.

Nokko-Chan understood the Samurai's Magical Skill. '*The ability to cut something only by seeing it, regardless of distance*'.

That would explain how she got past Genopsycho's suit.

By seeing parts of Genopsycho's face not covered by the suit, she can cut it without even trying.

Genopsycho's suit is invincible, but not Genopsycho herself.

In the shadow of the buildings, next to Nokko-Chan, is a Magical Girl in a chef's outfit, cowering and watching as the battle unfolds.

Then, Nokko-Chan heard a rumbling noise behind her. Friction? Concrete rubbing against each other?

She looked back and saw the over 10 meter tall building being cut in half…

…and the top half was falling towards Nokko-Chan and the chef!

Instinctively, Nokko-Chan kicked the chef Magical Girl, and she was launched away to the side, away from the shadow of the building.

Nokko-Chan herself then dived out of the way,

A crashing noise sounded behind her as she saw the building sprawled out over the Town Square.

Dust overwhelmed the area, coming from the building's crash site.

Nokko-Chan couldn't see. There was dust everywhere.

Then, she saw a silhouette of the Katana wielding Magical Girl.

She raised her sword, looking straight at Nokko-Chan.

"The Forest Musician! Give her to me! *Now*!"

The Samurai's eyes were bloodshot with rage. She was going to kill for what she wanted.

She brought her sword down.

It would only take a second. Nokko-Chan had no way of escaping. She would die here.

Nokko-Chan closed her eyes.

She heard the sound of slashing. Stone breaking.

Nokko-Chan felt fine. There were no slashes.

She slowly opened her eyes, and standing in front of her was @NyanNyan, and in front of @NyanNyan, was a large boulder, now cut in half.

Held between the gaps of the fingers of @NyanNyan were what appeared to be scrolls marked with symbols.

8 scrolls, small scrolls, all carried in-between @NyanNyan's fingers.

"Nokko-Chan, run, Ru!"

Nokko-Chan bolted out of the battle scene. Looking back, she saw @NyanNyan run around the Samurai, as the Samurai continuously tried to slash at @NyanNyan.

@NyanNyan would throw the scroll at the Samurai, and it would break up and turn into a

gigantic boulder.

The Samurai had a smile on her face as she continued to slash the boulders that were launched towards her.

And with the 8th and final largest boulder, the Samurai also slashed it apart. The crash made another large dust cloud, which the Samurai used as camouflage.

Nokko-Chan heard slashing noises, she saw silhouettes of two Magical Girls fighting, she nervously held her mop.

When the dust settled, a bloodied Samurai girl stood in front of Nokko-Chan, sword in her hand.

Nokko-Chan prepared with her mop, though she knew she couldn't possibly win this fight.

The Samurai let out a chuckle as she once again prepared to cut Nokko-Chan in half.

Where's @NyanNyan?

Did she die?

If she was gone, Nokko-Chan is finished.

Then, from the distance, she saw a scroll being thrown just above the Samurai girl.

The scroll broke open, and in only a split-second, a large building appeared above the Samurai girl.

Crash!!!

Another large dust cloud.

Silence.

Nokko-Chan looked around. On top of the fallen building was @NyanNyan.

Nokko-Chan ran forward towards her. @NyanNyan had saved her life again. Nokko-Chan ran straight towards her and hugged her.

@NyanNyan hugged Nokko-Chan back, but in her face were only tears, and she couldn't hold back her crying.

Nokko-Chan, while hugging her friend, looked towards the area where Genopsycho's corpse was.

But…

…There was no corpse. Only Genopsycho's Magical Phone.

Genopsycho's corpse was gone…

Master's Side
Part 3

"How did it go?"

The girl asked Fal,

"Horrible. Everyone was angry, Pon. Then they all tried to kill each other."

The girl placed her index finger on her glasses.

She had her right finger playing with her hair.

"This was to be expected of these children, I guess. They're still participating in the game, so it will continue regardless of what happens," the girl said with a smile.

"Nobody refused, nobody complained, the game continues!"

Fal stared at the girl. Fal blinked twice.

"What are you staring at?"

"I have a proposal, Pon"

“I’m listening”

“It’s not too late, you know, Pon?”

“For what?”

“If you give up now, the Land of Magic can still pardon you, Pon. You haven’t directly caused any
deaths, it’s still negotiable, Pon.”

“Not an option, sorry”

“Then they will send someone to stop you, Pon”

“It doesn’t matter, what matters is that we find the ideal Magical Girl.”

The two didn’t speak.

The girl played with her bangs.

“For now, these children believe that you are the culprit, Fal.”

“Convenient. The mascot character kidnapping all the Magical Girls and forcing them to kill each
other, Pon. It’s a believable story, Pon.”

The girl adjusted her glasses.

“I will continue the teachings of my Master. I’ll find the ideal Magical Girl, if that happens, then it doesn’t matter what comes next.”

Chapter 4:
Mysterious Candy

☆ Shadow Gale

“If a Magical Girl dies, their items stay in their Magical Phones, correct?”

“That’s correct, Pon!”

“What happens if their Magical Phones are destroyed?”

“Then the items go back to their original state, Pon! Shop items return to the shop, and event items disappear, attainable only during the events again, Pon!”

Pfle shook her head in disappointment.

Since items are stored as data within the Magical Phone, then there’s almost no way to physically search every Magical Girl.

Their weapons, armor, and any items they received are stored as data in their Magical Phones, and are put back there when they aren’t using it.

“Thank you, Fal”

Fal disappeared afterwards.

Earlier, there had been a confrontation among all the Magical Girls.

Fal gathered them all within the Wasteland’s Town, and announced some rather dire news.

Death in the game means death in real life.

Afterwards, Pfle stepped forward and dropped even worse news.

While Magical Daisy’s death had been an accident in the hands of fighting a monster, there was another death.
This time, it was a murder.

Masked Wonder had been murdered at the start of the 2nd login period.

She may have been a little eccentric, but Masked Wonder’s heart was in the right place.

She was the embodiment of justice.

She always wanted to help people.

She even got to socialize with other Magical Girls.

And she was murdered.

Not only that, but her murderer took all the items from her Magical Phone.

So Pfle, along with the other teams' leaders, suggested a temporary cooperation to discover the murderer.

By showing everyone's Magical Phones one by one, process of elimination could determine the murderer.

But then the Samurai Magical Girl had refused.

More than that, she had become aggressive.

One of the Magical Girls had stood in front of Pfle and the Samurai, and she was also presumably killed as well.

Pfle would've been killed too if Shadow Gale hadn't stepped in and got her out of the way.

Other Magical Girls began to attack the Samurai, but she could easily repel them.

She sliced a building, which caused a dust cloud that blinded most. During that time, many of the teams retreated.

Shadow Gale managed to stay in the background, as she and Pfle wanted to make sure the Samurai didn't get away.

The Samurai Girl was fighting a Chinese dressed girl.

Boulders were thrown, and at the end, the Samurai Girl was going to finish off the Maid.

But then, a building popped up out of nowhere.

No, that's not right.

It popped out of a scroll.

The building crushed the Samurai.

At the end of the fighting, the China girl removed the building, presumably storing it in one of her scrolls.

The Samurai Girl's remains were… something that Shadow Gale didn't want to remember…

Her Magical Phone was beyond repair.

Destroyed.

Utterly destroyed.

Based on what Fal had said before, there's no way to confirm if the Samurai girl had the Miracle Coin.

Process of elimination would suggest that she's the killer, and her aggressive side should support that theory, but…

…There's no proof that she was the one that killed Masked Wonder.

After the incident, Pfle and Shadow Gale discussed on what to do for the future.

They had to team up with the other team leaders. Otherwise, they'll all be in danger.

A meeting place had been set up.

There has been no rest for these two since then.

Sometimes, Shadow Gale wondered if they should slow down and take it all in.

Her head was dizzy from all this brainstorming.

Why are we having a meeting with every other Magical Girl when the killer would obviously be one of them?

Three people have been murdered.

How is Pfle so calm during all this?

Shadow Gale felt like she might have a fever from overthinking everything.

"Mamori, you seem worried. Everything is under control, don't worry."

“I know, my lady. I know that you have everything planned out. I’m not worried.”

“You sound calm, but I’ve known you long enough to know that you’re stressed behind that façade, Mamori.”

Shadow Gale continued to maintain her facial expression.

Pfle moved around in her wheelchair.

“Do you remember the name of the examiner in charge of our selection tests? Did she ever say her name? Hm, no matter… we were young, and when we became Magical Girls, we had our physical and mental strength grown. Feelings of fear have disappeared.”

“They haven’t disappeared for me, my lady…”

“The Land of Magic seeks ideal Magical Girls, Mamori. They select those who would sacrifice themselves for the sake of others without a moment’s notice. They seek saints, heroes. Supposedly, these are the kinds of people who pass the tests. In theory, at least.”

What Pfle said somehow made Shadow Gale feel a little bit more calm. Though she was
still on edge.

Pfle moved on, this time showing another app she purchased.

“Take a look at this, Mamori. This is the ‘*Item Picture Book*’. It’s like the Monster one, but
for Items.”

Pfle opened the app.

Pictures of various items appeared. The name, the price, and some numbers that Shadow Gale didn’t know.

“What are these numbers?”

In each item, were some strange numbers. For example,

Pass: 10000 (4).

A number on the left, and a number in parenthesis.

“The number on the outside is the maximum number of items that exist in the game. The
number in the parenthesis are the amount that’s in possession by players. So there are 4 people with passes to cross through areas.”

“Ah, makes sense”

“But that’s not why I showed you this book. Take a look at this.”

Pfle scrolled into the item that she wanted to show.

Shadow Gale saw it.

Miracle Coin: 1 (1)

“Wait… There’s…”

“Correct. The number in the parenthesis isn’t 0. Fal told us that if their Magical Phones are destroyed, they would return, correct?”

“…So she wasn’t our killer”

Pfle shook her head.

Shadow Gale’s heartbeat raced faster.

The killer was still out there.

That’s impossible.

“No, that can’t be right”

“Why do you think so?”

“Because everyone else was clean. We checked! It has to be the Samurai”

“Evidence says otherwise, Mamori”

“Then they threw it away!”

“Impossible. The Picture Book says that it still exists. Someone still kept it”

“Then they got it again through another event”

“We would have known about it. That event was one-of-a-kind”

“Okay… then they equipped the item and hid it somewhere on their clothes or something”

“Impossible as well. Fal told us that the items would always show up in the Magical Phone even if you equip them. Even if they hid it, their phones would show it”

“Fal!? My lady… You’re trusting *that* thing!?”

“He has never lied to us before”

“Yes he has!”

“He has given his word to tell the truth”

“And that’s supposed to make a difference!?”

“Mamori, he is telling the *truth*”

“*Why* do you trust him so much, huh!?!?”

“Because Fal is on *our* side, Mamori!”

Pfle had placed her hand on her wheel, and it was bellowing out dark steam. Perhaps it was the emotional burst that just occured.

Shadow Gale had thrown patience out the window. For the first time, she had actually screamed directly at Pfle, and she didn’t feel good about it.

“Detick Bell has a method. She finds culprits slowly. An alibi. Proof. We need to find proof of who the killer is.”

Shadow Gale took a deep breath.

“But my lady… Why do you trust Fal?”

“It’s true that it may be difficult to read him, seeing as he’s only a small round shape with blank eyes. He lacks tone, expression, facial features, odor, sweat. All things that can be
used to detect lies. However…”

Pfle removed her hand from the wheels of her wheelchair, and she extended it to Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale took out a hankerchief and began to clean the dark soot from Pfle’s palm.

“…Did you not sense the way he talked? He dislikes his Master. He dislikes this game. He makes no excuses when we blame him for all of this. Fal is on the players’ side.”

Pfle’s hands had cooled down.

“So, I’m sure you understand why I trust Fal. Somehow, our killer managed to hide the presence of the Miracle Coin. But our killer is still out there, and that’s not the only thing…”

Pfle’s tone had become normal and calm once again.

“…Genopsycho’s body was gone. I don’t know what happened, but Magical Girl bodies don’t disappear if they die in the game. We know that.”

“Do you think someone stole it?”

“Possibly”

“What for?”

“I do not know”.

Pfle shrugged her shoulders.

“This is precisely why we need more information. We need to know our enemy. We cannot fight them until we know what they can do and what they are capable of.”

Pfle’s expression, once again, was that of a determined planner, and a brilliant strategist.

☆ Detick Bell

When Detick Bell announced the news of her investigation of Magical Daisy, she felt like a real detective.

She felt like one of the main characters of detective stories, finally announcing the killer

and method of murder.

It was a dream come true.

However, the mood was bittersweet. Even though she loved the feeling, she hated the circumstances.

A Magical Girl has died, and that in itself is not something to be happy about.

Afterwards, there was a battle.

The opponent, a Samurai Magical Girl.

Her power was overwhelming. There was no way Detick Bell could even contribute.

Her teammates did, but Detick Bell knew when she can't fight.

She ran away to safety until the dust settled.

When it did, she had noticed Nokko-Chan and @NyanNyan escaping the scene of the crime.

The reason, Genopsycho's corpse was gone.

They went to look for her whereabouts.

Once the coast was clear, Team Bell went back to the crime scene.

Part of this was because Bell wanted to figure out the mystery for herself. Another part was also because Pfle wanted to know as well.

The leaders of each team had agreed to cooperate for now, even though they know that one of them might be a killer.

Bell would find out the identity of this killer. She will make sure they don't get a chance to
murder again.

After all, she was a detective, this is her job.

This was her passion.

"It hurts, Bellsie! It really does…"

A voice cried out as Detick Bell walked over to the wreckage of the battle site.

Lapis Lazuline, the blue Magical Girl, with a short black hair reaching the shoulders.

"You're hurt?" asked Bell.

"Yeah… Genopsycho's gone and it hurts!"

She can act very childish sometimes, even if she probably knows what's going on. Bell was okay with that. In a way, she was like the team kid.

"Bellsie, you think Genopsycho's alive? They never found her body, right!? That means she must be alive!"

Bell walked over to the shadow of a building. Next to her, leaning on the building, was Mellvile, the elf.

With a large bow and arrow, she folded her hands and looked at Bell. Bell acknowledged
her and nodded.

"I mean, isn't there some hope? Her suit's indestructible, right? Right? That's her power, right? That means there's no way that sword cuts through!"

"The sword didn't have to cut through, there were gaps in the armor. That Samurai could
cut the inside without breaking the armor"

“That’s just impossible, Bellsie! I won’t believe it!”

Lazuline always took death pretty hard.

“Maybe… Maybe she was resurrected! Like Frankenstein! All stitches and everything! You think that’s possible!?”

Lazuline looked at Mellvile.

“What do you think, Melly?”

Mellvile shrugged.

“Is that a yes!? That’s a yes!!! See, Bellsie? Genopsycho’s fine!”

Detick Bell closed her eyes.

“There might be an item that does that. Who knows? For now, we’re not really sure”

“I have hope, Bellsie! I’ve got a *lot* of hope! Heroes win in the end!”

Detick Bell glanced over at Mellvile.

“It’s been a while. Is she done, yet?”

Mellvile nodded,

“She should be coming back any time now.”

From the side and cracks of the building, a small, no… a tiny girl scampered across the floor.

She grew to normal size.

Cherna Mouse. Resident size shifter.

Cherna Mouse shook her head,

“No sign or smell of Genopsycho anywhere. She’s not here”

Lazuline’s eyes brightened.

“So, it was just a phantom!? She wasn’t actually killed? We were just having a mass hallucination!?”

Bell sighed and shook her head,

“No, it just means her body’s gone and whoever or whatever did it left no evidence behind. I doubt what we all saw was a hallucination.”

“But… But Bellsie… She could still be alive, right?”

Detick Bell looked at Lazuline, her face filled with hope.

She thought about her next answer carefully.

“Well, we should find proof of that, right? So let’s go find her”

☆ Nokko-Chan

Nokko-Chan had been walking with @NyanNyan for a long time.

They wanted to find Genopsycho.

Nokko-Chan had talked to Detick Bell. The detective promised to find clues as to Genopsycho’s whereabouts. However, Detick Bell was a detective. She would thoroughly search an area before committing.

Nokko-Chan didn’t have that kind of time, so she and @NyanNyan decided to just search out the whole game areas to find Genopsycho.

At first, Nokko-Chan tried to use the map application to find out Genopsycho’s location.

But unfortunately, the teammate location that’s displayed doesn’t point to the teammate’s
body, only their Magical Phone.

Genopsycho’s Magical Phone was in the Wasteland Town, so the app was useless for finding her.

Genopsycho… If you’re alive, why don’t you show yourself?

There had been two likely deaths within Team Daisy. Magical Daisy herself, and (probably) Genopsycho.

This fact had made @NyanNyan rather… unstable, emotionally.

@NyanNyan had clung to Nokko-Chan, perhaps seeing herself as a protector of

Nokko-Chan, who is much younger.

Nokko-Chan herself wanted to protect @NyanNyan, both physically and emotionally.

Occasionally, she would influence @NyanNyan to feel just a bit happier.

Of course, Nokko-Chan can't influence people's behavior, only their emotions.

Sometimes this would have unintentional effects.

For example, @NyanNyan would feel happy, which would lead her to laugh along

Nokko-Chan, then it would lead to her remembering her other teammates, which would lead to her feeling depressed again.

Sometimes, Nokko-Chan tried to influence extreme emotional happiness.

More often than not, this would be… dangerous.

Extreme happiness often led to @NyanNyan becoming dazed, with empty glazed eyes, and almost drunken like state, as emotional conflicts within her caused her mind to just stop functioning. At which point Nokko-Chan would have to snap her out of it.

Nokko-Chan wanted to make @NyanNyan happy, but perhaps she shouldn't force it.

What's important is that @NyanNyan is safe and healthy. That's all that matters now.

"I've quit being a Magical Girl, Ru"

A sudden voice.

The two had eaten silently that day. No one talked. They ate Preserved Food.

@NyanNyan was silent.

Nokko-Chan was silent.

Then, suddenly, @NyanNyan broke that silence.

Nokko-Chan felt conflict within @NyanNyan.

No powers. She'll talk to her. She'll find out why. That's how she'll cheer her up.

"You've quit?"

"Yes, Ru"

"You?"

"Me"

Nokko-Chan tilted her head in confusion.

"So, you're not a Magical Girl?"

"Not exactly, Ru. I can always be a Magical Girl, I've just… stopped, Ru."

"Why were you chosen for this game if you've quit?"

"I do not know, Ru"

Nokko-Chan chewed her food and swallowed it. She asked again.

"If… If it's okay with you. Why did you stop?"

There was silence.

Maybe @NyanNyan didn't want to talk about it.

Then, @NyanNyan looked at Nokko-Chan, her lizard tail curled up.

"…It was… There was something that happened… It was unpleasant, Ru."

"Unpleasant? What do you mean?"

Nokko-Chan stopped there. She didn't want to push too hard, but she was also curious as well.

@NyanNyan looked troubled. Nokko-Chan sensed confusion.

@NyanNyan spoke.

"…I don't… I can't remember, Ru"

@NyanNyan took a bite out of her Preserved Food. She chewed slowly.

Nokko-Chan stayed silent.

"I've quit being a Magical Girl… But I was chosen for this game… Why…"

@NyanNyan put her food down and hung her head down as well.

"…Nokko-Chan. Back on top of that building, I… I cried… because I killed someone… Ru…"

"You saved my life"

"But… I killed someone… Ru"

Nokko-Chan looked at the sky.

There were no clouds.

No stars.

No moon.

Just darkness, stretched out across the open sky.

That darkness was reflected in @NyanNyan's eyes.

@NyanNyan continued to whisper

"…The… The second time… I… feel it. This is the second time…"

Tears began to roll down her face. She can't hold it back anymore.

Rustle Rustle

They heard a sound. The bush moved behind them.

"Who's there, Ru!?"

"Do not be alarmed, It is only I"

A wheelchaired Magical Girl came forth. Pushing her wheelchair was a black suited nurse Magical Girl.

Pfle. That was her name.

The black nurse… Nokko-Chan couldn't remember.

What she can remember was that the black nurse saved Pfle's life.

The Samurai was going to kill her, and the black nurse jumped and carried Pfle away just in time.

Masked Wonder was their teammate.

"Did you forget our names? I am Pfle, and this is my partner, Shadow Gale."

That's her name.

Shadow Gale. Right.

"Why did you come, Ru?"

"We came with hope of a discussion. Would that be fine with you two?"

Maybe they knew about Genopsycho?

Or maybe it's something else.

"As long as you don't threaten us, then yes, Ru"

@NyanNyan stood in front of Nokko-Chan.

Pfle nodded her head.

“It seems we have an issue. While Detick Bell is perfectly willing to cooperate, her teammate, Cherna Mouse, is still quite stubborn about defending their hunting grounds. They appear to want more Magical Candy to clear the game. This must be stopped.”

@NyanNyan shook her head.

“If you’re thinking of asking for our help in fighting them, I say no, Ru. We are done risking our lives for this game, Ru.”

“We aren’t asking you to do that. We came here to offer an alliance. With all Magical Girls.”

Both Nokko-Chan and @NyanNyan were startled at that proposal.

Pfle closed her eyes, and with a serious tone, she said,

“More than ever, we need everyone to work together. So trust me for now, and know that I need your powers.”

☆ Shadow Gale

Currently, the new area that’s been opened was quite a departure from the other areas.

It’s a city.

More accurately, it’s a city with lots of electronics, cables, and a feeling of grunginess in it.

It’s actually quite close if you would call it a Cyberpunk city.

Compared to the Wasteland, Grasslands, and Mountain areas, the city was huge and a maze.

The enemies were robots.

According to the *Monster Picture Book*,

Attackers

Defenders

Shooters

Generals

4 types of robots.

Able to shock, fire small missiles, lasers, and of course, close quarter combat.

The enemies have gotten a lot stronger.

The shop in this area was also varied. It had weapons and armor that reached +5. Shadow Gale had already purchased weapons from this area.

Her weapon turned into a giant wrench, as it always has.

There is one more interesting thing about this area, to Shadow Gale at least.

Robots here drop one part of their body as an item.

Leg Parts

Arm Parts

Head Parts

These parts have a high selling price in the shop, but for Shadow Gale, they have a different purpose.

Shadow Gale's Magical Skill is '*The ability to improve technological objects*'.

She often calls this magic '*Remodeling*'.

She can improve the reception of a television, or increase the data capacity of a computer, or even mix and merge technology with each other.

That was her Magical Skill, and this area is a treasure trove for it.

She had planned to use these parts to improve Pfle's wheelchair.

Using her Magical Skill, Shadow Gale successfully increased the speed of Pfle's wheelchair. Even though it's fast already, now, it's even faster.

Operating time was also reduced by about 1 minute, so Pfle could react even faster than
usual.

Improvements were Shadow Gale's forte.

They had gone towards party members in an attempt to cooperate.

They had also wanted to duel Cherna Mouse for her insistence on guarding hunting grounds.

Shadow Gale and Pfle had earned @NyanNyan's cooperation. They had to stop Cherna
Mouse from continuously restricting other party members from monster hunting grounds.

To do that, they'll need some parts.

So now they were here, collecting robot parts.

Pfle was playing around with her Magical Phone.

"My lady, how long do we plan to do this"

"Until they're satisfied"

"What of the killer?"

"I'm suspecting a lot of people with no alibi, including our potential allies"

Shadow Gale widened her eyes.

"@NyanNyan?"

"She's not cleared yet"

"What makes you think she did it?"

“Did you notice how she fought the Samurai?”

“Boulders?”

“Correct. Her Magical Skill seems to involve sealing objects in scrolls, then being able to release those objects by using those scrolls. She not only released boulders, but an entire building”

“How does this relate to Masked Wonder?”

“Masked Wonder was killed by a stone pebble. True, this is not the large boulders she used against the Samurai, but we need proof to be sure.”

“You mean the Coin?”

Shadow Gale took out her giant wrench and giant scissors.

She began working on them and improving them using robot parts.

“We do not know the extent of her powers. She sealed a building to a scroll. What if she can seal data from her Magical Phone as well?”

It’s true that Magical Skills ignore the laws of physics and logic.

But could that really be possible, or was Pfle just being a bit too paranoid?

“I don’t think she’s the culprit”

“And why is that?”

Pfle still had her eyes on her Magical Phone.

“She wouldn’t be able to tamper with her Magical Phone. Remember that I couldn’t do it to get us to contact the Land of Magic?”

“Mmm… That is true. Good thinking, Mamori.”

“Right?”

“But we should still continue finding whoever is the killer, then.”

Pfle nodded, her eyes still on her Magical Phone, fingers tapping away.

Shadow Gale then took out all the robotic parts she had collected from the city, and began working on something as well.

“How is the progress, Mamori?”

“It should be done in a few minutes. Will this be enough?”

“We shall have to see.”

☆ Detick Bell

If you work as a Magical Girl, you will encounter some out-of-this-world events.

But there’s some events that’s just… too… out there

Even for Magical Girls.

For example, no matter how much you’re used to seeing mindblowing things, this sight was surreal for anyone.

A gigantic girl in a hamster outfit was fighting a gigantic spider-like robot with 10 legs.

This is like something out of a children’s TV show, except this was real.

Detick Bell had to remember that this wasn’t even a dream.

Her teammate, Cherna Mouse, had grabbed 2 of the 10-legged spider tank’s legs.

The spider tank replied by shooting a laser out of its eye, which just hurt Cherna Mouse.

Using its other legs, the spider tank tripped Cherna Mouse over, the resulting crash leveling several buildings and shook the ground.

As a teammate, Detick Bell wanted the best for Cherna Mouse…

…But because of what she discovered earlier this morning, perhaps it’s best if Cherna Mouse were to lose this fight…

“I’d like to propose a duel. Not to the death. A simple duel, with your teammate, Cherna Mouse”

Pfle had approached Detick Bell during breakfast.

She and Shadow Gale were confronting Team Bell.

Of course, Detick Bell was shocked.

“What!? A duel? Why?”

“You are team leader, are you not, Detick Bell?”

“Yes, I am”

“Do you realize that Cherna Mouse has been preventing other teams from using monster hunting grounds? She’s keeping the Magical Candies for her own team.”

“She… She’s *what*!?”

This was the first time Detick Bell had even known that Cherna Mouse was actively defending territory.

Pfle nodded,

“My teammate, Shadow Gale, has encountered Cherna Mouse before. She and Masked

Wonder were prevented access from hunting monsters, but we were allowed once Masked Wonder defeated Cherna Mouse.”

Detick Bell slightly sensed another motive.

“What are you suggesting, Pfle?”

“Based on what Masked Wonder has said before, Cherna Mouse is to allow stronger opponents to use their hunting grounds. Isn’t that correct, Melville?”

Pfle’s eyes focused on Melville, who was calmly folding her arms.

Melville simply smiled.

Pfle continued on, “Then I suggest a time and place. Later, in the Wasteland Area. We will send in our champion, and you will send in Cherna. If we win, you will release all claims from hunting grounds, and allow other teams to use it. Do we have a deal?”

“No we don’t!” Bell retorted.

“We do,” replied Melville.

“It’s settled. Good day to you then, Team Bell,” said Pfle with a smile.

She and Shadow Gale then left the breakfast grounds of Team Bell.

Detick Bell however, was not happy.

“…Cherna… Did you really prevent other teams from using monster hunting grounds”

“I did! Yes I did! I did a good job too!”

Cherna Mouse had no hesitation.

“Why would you *do* that!? We’re supposed to be cooperating with the others, not competing with them!”

“Well… I didn’t know about that…”

“Don’t play dumb. You know that Pfle wanted to cooperate. We’re not supposed to be fighting each other, Cherna!”

Cherna Mouse simply cowered and ducked away.

Lazuline stood between them.

“Hey, hey! Cherny! Bellsie! Arguing and fighting never solves anything!”

“*Exactly*, Cherna. *Fighting* doesn’t solve anything! Argh…”

“Don’t be harsh on Cherny, Bellsie!”

Detick Bell was furious, but at the same time, she understood everything.

After the City Area was opened, the teams all worked together to communicate their plans.

Opening the next area required a Password to be cracked in an office within the City Area. This much, Detick Bell knew.

When Detick Bell had reported it to the other teams, the other teams were visibly nervous near Detick Bell's team.

…Now she knows what, or rather, *who* has caused all of that.

"Don't worry! Cherna promises! Cherna will beat them all! Cherna will win!"

Cherna Mouse shouted with vigor.

How can she even be confident about this? This shouldn't even be decided with a fight. Cherna shouldn't be fighting, but she's still so determined about it.

Cherna shouldn't be fighting other Magical Girls either.

Detick Bell's head felt light.

"Cherna, stop this"

"She won't"

Suddenly, Melville's eyes glared at Cherna, then at Detick Bell.

Of course. Cherna had never taken orders from Bell, she's only ever taken orders from Melville directly.

"Melville, tell her to stop it. Now."

"Mmm, and why should she?"

"Because we're supposed to be working together"

"With a killer mixed up with the rest? Ah right, did you forget?"

Melville's right. Bell still didn't know who the killer was.

Could the killer be on Pfle's team? Did she kill her own teammate?

Was it on someone else's team?

Was it on Bell's team?

"Bell, tell me, how are you so sure that Pfle is to be trusted?" asked Melville.

Detick Bell had no answer for that. Nobody had an alibi. Everyone started in their own locations when the login period started.

Anyone that was close enough to Masked Wonder could have killed her.

Detick Bell bit her lip. She was nervous. She could taste blood in her tongue. That was how nervous she was about the upcoming fight.

Cherna Mouse's Magical Skill, '*The ability to change size*'. A simple ability. Simple but deadly.

Cherna had always been able to take out groups of enemy monsters, but how would she
fare against a Magical Girl?

Detick Bell wouldn't know; she's never seen Cherna fight a Magical Girl before.

The arena was set by Pfle. The Wasteland area. There would be many abandoned buildings there. Cherna would probably be at a disadvantage. Gigantic things are better at fighting in open space.

There's no choice now.

They are here.

Detick Bell, Melville, and Lazuline was watching from a distance.

Cherna had grown to 30 meters tall.

They were awaiting their opponent.

Detick Bell saw someone approaching the battlefield.

@NyanNyan.

She was a strong Magical Girl for sure, but how would she fight a gigantic Cherna Mouse?

“You’re Cherna’s enemy?” asked Cherna Mouse in a large voice.

“I am not, she is, Ru.”

Who was ‘she’?

@NyanNyan threw a scroll into the air, and ran away from the battlefield.

From the scroll came a large explosion, and from that explosion, what could only be described as a marvel in technology had appeared.

A gigantic, large metallic sphere.

From it, sprouted 10 large gigantic legs. Like a spider, but with 10 legs. Each giant leg was tipped with a sharp point, and from the sphere was a large red retina-like display.

That… That *thing* could only be described as a tank. A Spider Tank.

Cherna herself was shocked, and Bell couldn’t believe what she was seeing.

The Spider Tank was about as huge as Cherna Mouse. But to finally drive the point home, Bell saw Shadow Gale carrying Pfle on her back.

Shadow Gale ran up the Spider Tank’s legs, and jumped on top of the tank.

She opened a lid on the tank, and Pfle entered it. Shadow Gale nodded at Pfle before closing the lid.

Shadow Gale then jumped down, and ran as far away from the battlefield as possible.

From the Spider Tank was a large booming voice of Pfle.

“Well then, Cherna Mouse… Let us begin this duel. I will be your opponent”

Detick Bell’s mouth was gaping open.

“What the hell…”

Cherna was still stunned in disbelief, and then…

Crash!!!

The Spider Tank charged forward and charged at Cherna.

Cherna Mouse stumbled backwards, but reacted fast. She stood up and grabbed the Spider Tank’s legs. Two of them, leaving 8 more free.

One of the Spider Tank’s legs sweeped Cherna’s legs, putting her down in one knee, and with the Spider Tank’s retina, shot a laser directly at Cherna’s chest.

Cherna let go of her grip, hurt by the burning beam of the laser.

At this state, Cherna Mouse will lose.

But Detick Bell honestly wanted Cherna to lose.

If Cherna loses, she’ll stop threatening other party members. It’ll be easier for her team to cooperate.

But Bell was also worried for Cherna herself.

The Spider Tank fired another laser at Cherna, and Cherna stumbled backwards and fell, shaking the ground as she did.

“Cherna, stop! You’ve done enough!” said Detick Bell, trying her best to stop the fight.

Melville shook her head, still looking at the battlefield with a calm look on her face.

“You believe Cherna will die, hmm? Pfle herself said that she wouldn’t kill. If she did, that
would make her a killer” said Melville calmly.

Cherna stood up, cupped her hands to her mouth and bent her knees.

Bell understood what was going to happen. She closed her ears and prepared herself.

Then, Cherna Mouse screamed. She screamed as hard as she could, she screamed so loudly that the buildings all shattered.

The Spider Tank staggered, it tried to keep its balance, but it was falling and slipping.

Then, Cherna Mouse did something extraordinary. With the Spider Tank weakened, Cherna grew…

She grew…

And grew…

She's now 3 times bigger than the Spider Tank. She raised her arms.

From the back of the Spider Tank, a black cylindrical object was ejected, as it crashed to
the ground and rolled a considerable distance away.

Cherna brought her arms down on the Spider Tank, crushing its metallic exterior, creating a large explosion as it collapsed under the weight of the gigantic girl.

Cherna jumped towards the wreck of the Spider Tank, and with her leg, stomped it and stomped it and stomped it.

Cherna Mouse had won.

☆ Pechika

Pechika had been deceived. She had been lied to. Her whole team had been lied to.

Death is not virtual. Death is a real thing in the game.

Dying in the game means dying in real life.

Even worse, there's no escape from this game, so Pechika was forced to play it.

The next area after the City Area was underground. Accessible via a hatch, which served as the gate.

It wasn't some man-made dungeon. No, it was a cave.

A natural cave.

And with caves comes darkness, and dampness, and craggy rocks.

The caves themselves were wide enough for Pechika and her team to walk through them.

The ceiling was tall as well. About 4 times higher than Pechika.

Pechika had tripped. Pain. This cave was very hard to see in. But Pechika had to push through. She had to continue the game.

She had to win the game and escape this hell.

Earlier, there was a gigantic battle, literally.

Two giants. Cherna Mouse, and Pfle, inside some kind of Spider Tank.

Cherna Mouse had won the duel.

Pfle had an escape pod installed on her Spider Tank. She would've died if she didn't use
it.

Personally, Pechika thought that Pfle did a good job fighting, based on what Miyokata had told her.

Cherna Mouse was just impossible to defeat with her powers.

Pfle had been congratulated by the other members who were there, and they disbanded.

Although it wasn't possible to stop Cherna Mouse from doing what she's doing, the least they could do was reward Pfle for her hard work.

The next day, the next area was opened by Pfle.

She found the password for the gate by using a cipher to parse through the hints of the opening event.

She did all that while preparing to fight Cherna Mouse.

Pechika looked up to Pfle. She was a hard worker.

The scouting team consisted of Pechika and Miyokata, but this time, they had merged with the combat team.

There was no need for the scouting team at this point in the game.

Not only that, but the enemies in the Underground Area were much stronger. Splitting the team would be dangerous.

The only one who would be fighting in the scouting team would be Miyokata, and that would put her under a lot of strain.

The team has already bought the weapons from the City Store. Very durable, highly expensive.

Still, weapons or not, Pechika was inexperienced to fighting.

Pechika, like other Magical Girls in the game currently, had heard the proposal from Pfle.

In order to clear the game successfully, it's best for all parties involved that the Magical Girls work together and unite.

Unfortunately, not all Magical Girls are working together.

Thankfully, Team Clantail has agreed to this proposal. Even Leonetta seems enthused by it, so at least Pechika knew they were all fine with it.

The result is that they were able to clear the City Area in the fastest time as they could, and now they're here.

Whilst walking down the dark corridors of the cave, Leonetta leaned in towards Pechika.

"Don't worry Pechika! If there's anything that wants to hurt you, they're gonna have to go
through me first"

Miyokata scowled at Leonetta.

“Heeey, why are you getting close to her?”

“What’s it matter to you?”

“Pechika is on the scouting team with me! Therefore, we are as close as *sisters*!”

“What kind of logic is that?”

Their relationship was still awkward, but Pechika was glad to be noticed.

She remembered when she thought that she was just dead weight to her team. Now it looks like they acknowledge or at least want her in the team.

Whenever there was food to be made, her team would always look towards Pechika expectantly.

They had now welcomed her as a member of the team.

Leonetta pinched Pechika’s cheeks while smiling.

Miyokata praised Pechika as she walked.

Having the two of them like this made Pechika happy and confident. It boosted her confidence greatly.

Team Clantail continued to venture towards the cave, when they encountered an enemy.

The enemy of the Underground Area…

…A Dragon.

11 meters long, 4 meters of wingspan.

With a roar that shook the very caves themselves.

Straight out of a fantasy story.

Clantail didn’t hesitate. Her lower body had already been transformed to a spider, and silk shot out of it, its webbing tying up the dragon.

Furiously, the dragon tried to wriggle its way out of the tight webbing, but like an actual spider, Clantail pounced on the dragon and began wrapping it as fast as she can.

With the dragon immobilized, Leonetta took her chance.

From her hands extended long claws, and in her face was a smile that horror movie monsters would make.

She ran towards the neck of the dragon and stabbed it with the claws. Then, she moved her arm forcefully downwards, creating a slash that shattered the scales of the dragon.

The roar shook the caves, but the dragon was still alive.

Clantail performed the finishing blow.

With her spider abdomen, she sharpened her venom stinger, and punctured it straight to
the belly of the dragon.

Finally, after a large bellowing roar, the dragon was killed.

Pechika simply looked at the whole fight.

Leonetta and Clantail had cooperated without saying a single word. They've had experience with each other.

But more than that, Clantail was different in the Underground Area.

Due to the slippery dampness of the floor, it's not good to use hooves like a pony or a deer.

Instead, Clantail transformed into a spider.

Pechika didn't think spiders were cute, and wished that Clantail could be something else,
but she understood the need for practicality outweighed the need for appearance.

This dark underground cave has taken a toll on all of them.

Pechika in particular didn't really have a combat role. Everyone accepted that. Instead, she became a healer.

She had carried many Health Potions, and after the dragon battle, they needed the rejuvenation.

Particularly Miyokata's pet, the little demonic imp, who was blown away by the dragon's roar.

After rejuvenating, they then began to reap the rewards of the Magical Candies and rare items.

Cherna Mouse wouldn't let anyone near her, so they had to look towards other areas for this.

This is the reason why the scouting and combat teams were merged.

After collecting the candies, they would use it to buy more Health Potions and other items of interest.

In the Underground Area's shop, there were some more unique items.

For example, a red amulet that lets you become stronger if the enemy's affinity is 'Fire'.

Thus, Team Clantail's job was to collect these items and candy and provide for the whole
united Magical Girl front.

This was okay for Pechika.

Other teams had different jobs. They would open areas, they would figure out how to clear the game.

Team Clantail just had to provide resources. Straightforward, not a lot of risk.

Pechika just carried healing items. Her teammates would protect her.

Then, after a long day, they would eat.

Sit down, relax, eat.

Everyone in the team agreed to these conditions.

'*It was better than doing nothing*', '*we'll make faster progress this way*'.

Those were the words being thrown when they agreed to this arrangement.

After what happened yesterday with Pfle and Cherna Mouse, nobody even thought about fighting Cherna.

Let's not think about that.

It's lunch time.

Food. Pechika's specialty.

Her team's eyes were beaming, they were excited. They always looked forward to Pechika's meals.

'*So delicious!!!*' '*Yummy!*' '*This is good, Pechika*'.

…This was good.

…This was perfect.

…This was heaven.

…Friends… Peace… Happiness… Together…

Just once… Pechika wanted this moment to last.

It's a moment where she felt useful to her team, and a moment where everyone was peacefully being happy…

…Why can't we all just sit around and eat together?

And of course, as luck would have it, her Magical Phone rang.

It's the Log-Out period.

☆ Nokko-Chan

Everyone had gathered in the square.

Unlike the last time this happened during a log-out period, everyone's mood was sour.

Of course, Detick Bell's party seemed to be enjoying themselves, but Detick Bell herself had separated herself from the party.

Nokko-Chan could see the guilty look on Bell's face, and Nokko-Chan understood how she felt.

Cherna Mouse had beaten Pfle.

Pfle herself… her wheelchair was destroyed.

The Spider Tank was the result of Shadow Gale modifying Pfle's wheelchair. So when Cherna Mouse destroyed the Spider Tank…

…Cherna Mouse destroyed Pfle's wheelchair.

However, Pfle herself looked healthy. Shadow Gale was carrying Pfle on her back since then.

Clantail's team is still the same old same old.

Nokko-Chan couldn't hear Miyokata or Leonetta, but they were definitely arguing about *something*.

Clantail herself is stoically silent, and Pechika just looked down and sad.

@NyanNyan had been feeling a lot better since a few days ago. She had started to take control of her emotions, which was a good thing.

However, she was still determined to find Genopsycho, and so was Nokko-Chan.

Detick Bell had been investigating Genopsycho's disappearance, and according to Bell, there were possibilities that Genopsycho might be alive out there somewhere.

Possibilities that Nokko-Chan will be sure to fight for.

Since Nokko-Chan only had 2 members in her team, and so is Pfle's team, theoretically, they could merge.

However, if they merged, then Genopsycho would be teamless.

Assuming she's alive…

…No, she *has* to be alive.

Nokko-Chan and @NyanNyan won't abandon Genopsycho. They will find her.

But for now, Fal had appeared.

"Thank you all for coming, Pon"

His voice was monotone.

"So, here's the second log-out period! We'll all log out at the same time, Pon. As the same with before, we'll hold a special event today, Pon!"

He floated around the square.

"Today's special event is-"

He was interrupted.

He stopped in mid-air.

Suddenly, his image seemed to distort, shrink, expand, glitch, before it returned again.

Fal's expression looked… pained.

Almost as if he was hurt when it happened.

"…Today's… event…"

He looked around at everyone.

"…Everyone, please look at the amount of Magical Candies that you have, Pon."

Nokko-Chan took a look at hers. 2651.

She and @NyanNyan have been careful. They killed many things, but only spent a little on what they really need.

"In 15 minutes, the Magical Girl with the least amount of Magical Candy… will die, Bon…"

Silence.

The whole square was silent.

Then an outroar of anger.

Magical Girls blaming their own teammates for wasting Magical Candy, others again angry at Fal.

Fal merely repeated the words again in a monotone voice.

Nokko-Chan had realized something.

It's possible to transfer Magical Candies, which means it's possible to forcefully transfer Magical Candies.

Which means it's possible to steal Magical Candies.

Did any of the other Magical Girls realize this?

Nokko-Chan was afraid. She had to control her powers and not unconsciously influence everyone to fear and paranoia.

Then, Pfle, still on Shadow Gale's back, spoke calmly.

"Fal"

Fal glanced at Pfle.

"You said that if one Magical Girl has the least amount of Magical Candy, they will die. Well, what happens if multiple Magical Girls have the least amount?"

Fal's eyes widened.

For a second, he blinked.

He then took a deep breath.

"If multiple Magical Girls have the least amount of candy… The event will end with zero deaths, Pon!"

A smile appeared on Pfle's face.

“I’m sure you were glad to hear that suggestion from me, Fal”

Fal repeated the announcement again, more excitedly this time.

“If *multiple* Magical Girls have the least amount of candy, the event will end with *zero* deaths, Pon!”

All the Magical Girls had widened happy eyes.

Then, noises everywhere

“What should we do?”

“How should we do this?”

“Oh, what if we just remove all the candies!?”

“No way, then what’s the point?”

“Aren’t they items?”

“They aren’t items, Pon! They’re just numbers, Pon!”

Suggestions from different Magical Girls. All trying to work together.

This is great. The Magical Girls are all working together!

Pfle stepped in.

“How about we average the candies and transfer to each other so we’ll all have the same amount?”

That sounded like a good idea.

Fal nodded as well.

“Well then, you may announce your Magical Candies, Pon! You have about 5 minutes left!”

Everyone had announced their Magical Candies.

Then, Pfle got to work. She calculated the average, and asked everyone to transfer their candies to each other.

The Magical Girls formed a circle, and began transferring candies to and from each other.

Nokko-Chan and @NyanNyan not only transferred candies from their Magical Phone, but also from Genopsycho's, who wasn't here with them now, but will have the same risk
of dying.

Finally, everyone's Magical Candy amount should be the same.

3 minutes…

2 minutes…

1 minute…

Ding

Time's up.

"Well then, I guess that means the least amount of Magical Candy owners are… eh?"

A Magical Phone dropped.

The girl carrying it grabbed her chest.

Her hair flew.

Her face shocked.

She fell sideways.

Her sunflower seeds falling with her.

Fal began to glitch out in nervousness.

"…The one… with the least Magical Candies is… Cherna Mouse…? Pon…"

Fal's image continued to flutter and glitch, and he disappeared.

Master's Side
Part 4

The monitors showed bodies and corpses.

Cherna Mouse lying sideways, eyes open in shock.

Akane, the Samurai Magical Girl, crushed into a bloody pulp

Masked Wonder, face down, bleeding from the head.

Magical Daisy, a hole in her stomach, blood flowing out as she lay on the ground.

"Stop this… *Stop this*… Who's next, Pon? Who are you going to torture and kill next!?"

A synthetic voice, whose pitch had sometimes gone high and sometimes gone low, had shouted in an angry voice to a girl with glasses.

The girl with glasses laughed.

"*Me*? I killed no one! Magical Daisy killed herself in an accident. Everyone else killed each other! I only set the stage, Fal! These girls will kill each other because it's in their nature"

"Don't flatter yourself, Pon! You know *exactly* what you're doing. This entire game was designed so that they'll kill each other, Pon!"

"This game is a test, Fal… The ideal Magical Girl would rely on teamwork, not malice! They would work together to clear the game"

"…That didn't stop you from specifically giving skeletons with the ability to reflect long-range attacks, you *knew*! You *knew* that Magical Daisy loved her Daisy Beam, Pon!
You knew and you still made that enemy. She didn't need to die! She *was* an ideal Magical Girl!"

“Magical Daisy wasn’t an ideal Magical Girl because she was reckless. She shouldn’t have engaged an enemy without knowing their strengths, right? Hehe… What kind of Magical Girl does that make her?”

“Someone who actually *does* something and helps people, Pon!”

“Oh don’t take the high road, Fal. You barely do anything yourself”

“…I have, Pon”

“Hmm?”

Fal’s appearance glitched out. Shrunk. Enlarged. Pained.

“Against your wishes, Master… I’ve sent an e-mail to the *Land of Magic*. I warned you before, Pon. The killings, all of this. I told them *everything*. Now… Now they’re sending someone for you… They’ll stop you, Pon”

The girl with the glasses played with her Rubik’s Cube.

“Is that so? Then let her come”

The girl grinned as she adjusted her glasses.

Chapter 5
The Dragon and the Chinese Girl

☆ Pechika

Cherna Mouse has died. She fell down right in front of them. Why did this happen?

Someone came up to Cherna and checked on her Magical Phone. Then, surprisingly, they had said that Cherna had 1 less candy compared to everyone else.

Everyone looked around each other with suspicion.

Many blamed Pfle, as she was the one with the final check of the Magical Candy count.

A discussion turned into a shouting match.

Many Magical Girls blamed each other.

Everyone were suspicious of everyone else.

Pfle's expression was unreadable.

Detick Bell's team came to bury Cherna Mouse outside of the square.

When they carried her body, everybody else began to disperse in their own teams.

Team Clantail had retreated to their usual spot.

Clantail folded her arms and looked annoyed, probably frustrated at what just happened a few moments ago.

Leonetta and Miyokata were silent.

Pechika looked up at the sky.

No stars.

No clouds.

Just a black stretch of the night sky.

Leonetta broke the silence by muttering,

"At least this'll make hunting easier…"

That sentence seemed to only make everyone sadder.

Clantail stopped wagging her tail in frustration when she heard it, and her eyes look pained.

Miyokata as well.

Leonetta realized this, took a deep breath, and hung her head down.

Cherna Mouse was the one obstacle that every Magical Girl had to face when hunting monsters for Magical Candy.

It’s true that now that she’s gone, hunting will be easier.

But it was still sad to have a Magical Girl die like this.

They were all dragged into the same game. All forced to play this deathmatch, with no way to say no.

At this point, Team Clantail was the only team with full members.

4 full members.

They all survived this far. That was a blessing.

Pechika hoped that they could survive for far longer.

And just like that, Pechika had returned to the real world.

She looked up at the sky. The moon was shining. She looked to her left and right. This was her room.

She was back in the real world. Pechika was grateful.

The following morning, she washed her face.

She ate breakfast with her family. Her parents and little brother, but Pechika wasn’t focusing that well.

At school, she would daydream and be distracted. Her teacher even scolded her.

She didn’t care if her friends laughed. She was thinking of far more important things.

That game.

At one point she would think about the best monsters to hunt for more candy, at another,
she would be worried of dying the next time she logged in.

Later after school, she left early from school.

“Chika, are you okay?” asked one of her classmates

“Don’t worry! I’m fine!” said Chika with a smile.

As she found a safe place to transform, she once again became Pechika. She was in a hurry, so she had to improvise.

She found some small pebbles and flowers from the ground, and she used her Magical Skill on them.

Five minutes later they turned to delicious food.

Some delicious soup with some eggs,

Asparagus and bacon,

Chopped up octopus,

Of course, you have to have rice,

Deep fried chicken,

Petit potatoes,

Boiled spinach,

And some food to top it off.

The lunch box looked a little childish, but Pechika couldn’t really change the design.

She ran to get to her destination. Along the way, she helped an old man carrying some radishes to his store.

At a time like this, it’s nice to do a good deed once in a while.

She arrived at the practice field. They were just about ready to finish. In that field was Ninomiya-Kun, finishing up his baseball practice.

Pechika approached Ninomiya-Kun and his team. She offered the food, and they were all smiling as they saw it.

They sat down in a circle as they munched and ate it all.

“This is delicious!”

“Thanks a lot for the food!”

“I’ve never tasted food this yummy before!”

Watching Ninomiya-Kun smiling while eating, Pechika averted her eyes. This was such a
peaceful time.

Why didn’t Pechika ever do this earlier. Why did she have to wait until this stupid game happened?

Ninomiya-Kun then spoke out.

“Hey, how come I never see you at school?”

Pechika’s eyes widened.

How should she answer that?

She always saw Ninomiya-Kun in her Magical Girl form. She cooked the food using her powers. She can’t exactly reveal her true identity.

‘*Hi, I’m Chika, I’m a Magical Girl!*’.

That would be bad. She’d also be breaking the rules.

Pechika wished she could just tell Ninomiya-Kun about the whole situation.

The game.

The deaths.

He probably couldn’t do anything, but she needed emotional support.

“I guess I blend in with the other students, haha”

“That’s too bad. I’d like to hang out some more. Tell me more about yourself”

Pechika’s heart skipped a beat.

It wouldn’t hurt to tell more.

She then began to talk a bit about herself, her family. She shared stories. The time she slipped on wet floor and dropped the burning hot soup. Her mother was so furious, her grandfather laughed, and her little brother as well.

The time Pechika cooked amazing food for her family at a young age. Her mother was so proud of her.

Ninomiya-Kun listened to these stories and laughed along at the funny parts, nodded at the sadder parts, and smiled at the heartwarming parts.

Pechika didn't even notice the time flying by as the day began to end.

"Hey, it's getting late. Same time later on?" asked Ninomiya-Kun.

Pechika nodded.

Same time. She'd have to survive another login session.

"It's a promise then. Pinky swear?" Ninomiya-Kun asked with a smile, reaching his pinky finger out.

Pechika did the same.

Their fingers wrapped around each other.

Pechika wrapped her pinky finger tightly. Very tightly.

She didn't want to let go.

☆ Shadow Gale

Kanoe was buried deep in her thoughts.

More appropriately, she had shut herself out from anyone other than Mamori.

This was not uncommon when something was plaguing Kanoe's mind.

Her parents had asked her, "What's wrong?" but there was no answer. Kanoe simply went to her room and closed the door.

Kanoe would often find places where she was able to think in peace. One of them would be her own room. There, she could think about things without any disturbance.

The only one she let in the room with her was often Mamori, and only Mamori.

Kanoe sat in an old fancy chair. It was a centuries old chair, supposedly built in Europe.

The room itself was dark, no lights, no source of sunlight, no lamps. Kanoe hadn't bothered to open her blinds.

Mamori had opened the blinds. It's Summer, but about to become Fall once again. The cool breeze of the air mixed with the hot Summer day.

Light shined through the room.

The sound of cicadas and the Summer insects resounded outside.

It was a beautiful day, but the girl in this room was not thinking this way.

"How did it happen, Mamori?"

Without even asking, Mamori understood what Kanoe was asking.

"I don't know, my lady."

Mamori sat on Kanoe's bed. Normally, Mamori would sleep in the Servant's Room, but Kanoe has told her that this is also her second room as well.

Kanoe was deep in thought.

The question on her mind is 'How?'

How did Cherna Mouse die?

The plan was very simple. Have all the Magical Girls get the same amount of candy.

Kanoe had counted everyone's candy, and she even checked that everyone had the same number of candy.

So how, in the 3 minutes that was left, did Cherna Mouse end up with 1 less candy?

Everyone had blamed Pfle. It made sense. Pfle certainly had motive.

Pfle lost to Cherna Mouse in the duel. With no wheelchair and no weapon, this would be a way to get revenge.

But Pfle was not like that.

She had been carried on Shadow Gale's back all game long. Pfle may be intelligent, but physically, she's very weak. She can't walk, let alone engage in many physical activities.

All the Magical Girls were gathered in a circle back then. Everyone checked their neighbors to make sure nothing was off.

The amounts were supposed to be the same.

Cherna Mouse's neighbors were Detick Bell and Melville. Could one of them have betrayed her?

But if so, Cherna Mouse should have said something.

Both Detick Bell and Melville had the same amount of candies as Cherna Mouse before Cherna died.

Could someone have messed with her Magical Phone?

Impossible, there would've been noise. Transferring candy made some digital sounds from the phone.

'*Biriririririrrriiiiii*'.

Loud, distinct, cutesy. Impossible to ignore.

Then what about magic?

That's impossible as well.

Shadow Gale had demonstrated that the Magical Girls' magic doesn't work on the phones while inside the game.

So… *what* is it?

Kanoe pulled out a piece of paper and a pen.

She wrote down some notes.

Party A

Pfle – Magic wheelchair

Shadow Gale – Manipulate and remodel technology

Party B

Clantail – Lower body turns into animals

Leonetta – Can control dolls

Miyokata – Can tame and befriend any animal

Pechika – Creates delicious food out of anything

Party C (Cherna Mouse's party)

Cherna Mouse – Change sizes

Detick Bell – Communicate with buildings (Was standing to the right of Cherna)

Melville – To camouflage and blend into the environment (Was standing to the left of Cherna)

Lapis Lazuline – Teleport using gems

Party D

Nokko-Chan – Emotion manipulation

@NyanNyan – Seals items in scrolls, and can release them as well

Genopsycho – Invicible suit (Not present. Only Magical Phone was present)

Highly detailed. Kanoe played around with her pen.

"…What if someone lied about their magic ability?"

"Lied?"

"What if they told us false information? You don't think it's possible?"

"Sure I do, but, does that mean you found the culprit, my lady?"

"…I don't know. I would need evidence, and we don't have that."

Kanoe grabbed a teddy bear from her bed and hugged it, her brain struggling to figure out this mystery.

Mamori couldn't think of anything either.

How would someone accomplish this?

Mamori laid down on her bed.

Kanoe put her hands to her chin, tapping her fingers.

"Let us think of a motive. Why was Masked Wonder killed?"

"Her Miracle Coin, right?"

"Correct… why was Cherna Mouse killed?"

"…Hmm… She was in the way. She kept stopping people from hunting monsters"

"And their deaths are related with their Magical Phones. In both cases, the key evidence lies on Magical Phones. Yet, we were fooled… twice."

"So you're saying they're connected?"

“Yes, but then think… Who could have knowledge that I gave the Miracle Coin to Masked Wonder?”

Mamori shrugged in her bed.

“Mamori… what if it’s the Game Master?”

The Mastermind behind it all? The Game Master herself? It would certainly be possible.

“Think about it, Mamori. She knew about the Miracle Coin, and she has the power to

bring us into the game. She must be a Magical Girl with considerable powers. She could easily change settings of the Magical Phones”

Mamori went back to sitting on the bed.

She thought for a bit.

Then she shook her head.

“I’m sorry, my lady, but that’s not possible”

“Why is that?”

“Because what would be her motive?”

“Perhaps she is trying to stop us from escaping the game”

“But then why give us that option in the first place? If she’s all-powerful we would all be dead. We wouldn’t be able to do anything about it. Bringing us here, giving us a game with clearing rules, all that just to kill us all? I don’t think it’s her”

“But the only way to do these things is logically only possible if you are the Master. That is the only way you can commit these crimes”

“That’s true, but the motivations aren’t that of a Game Master trying to kill us. The motivations of these deaths are that of a player who wants to win for herself”

“…But the methods are something that could only be possible through outside assistance”

Mamori’s head was spinning. This was all so contradictory.

Kanoe on the other hand…

…Her eyes widened.

“Mamori… we’re assuming one culprit. What if it’s multiple people?”

“What? What do you mean?”

“What if the killer received rewards from the Master?”

That… would make sense.

A way to murder, help from the outside, but accomplished by a murderer from inside the game.

Kanoe squeezed on her teddy bear.

She had a devious smile on her face.

But Kanoe was not happy. No, quite the opposite.

Mamori knew this expression.

Kanoe was *angry*.

She didn’t like it when people threatened her family.

To Kanoe, family did not mean blood relatives. Family meant the people she would trust with her life.

When Mamori and Kanoe first went to high school, many students called her ‘*The goldfish’s lapdog*’, owing to Kanoe’s golden hair, and being so close to her.

A week later, Kanoe did something that caused the kids to be quiet.

Mamori didn’t know what, and didn’t want to know. However, she knew that Kanoe does not take lightly to people that threaten the people closest to her.

Masked Wonder was her family too.

She had been willing to protect Mamori even though Cherna Mouse threatened them as

a giant.

And now Masked Wonder is dead.

“Mamori… Whoever this culprit is… I will find her”

Mamori nodded. Kanoe was furious, and she will find the culprit no matter what.

☆ Detick Bell

Cherna Mouse was buried just outside the Town Square.

Detick Bell carried her body herself.

Cherna was stubborn, but she wasn’t a bad person.

They buried her with the giant sunflower seed that she always had with her.

Of course, the seed wasn’t from a real sunflower. It was part of Cherna’s costume. It’s edible though.

Team Bell never actually bought any Preserved Food for Cherna, because she insisted on chewing that gigantic sunflower seed. She didn’t want anything else.

Lazuline would get jealous that Cherna had her own private lunchbox.

Detick Bell didn’t like that Cherna died, even though she didn’t agree with Cherna’s methods.

This could’ve all been avoided.

Lapis Lazuline was crying near the grave.

Melville’s eyes were on Detick Bell.

With a sadlike look on her face, Melville spoke to Detick Bell.

“I’m leaving the team.”

“……Huh!?”

Detick Bell was caught by surprise.

Lapis Lazuline stopped crying and looked at Melville.

“Melly? Melly, don’t! W-What are we gonna do without you, Melly!”

“Mmm, Cherna Maus is dedd, ne? sourry, but itz for the best that oui go our saparate ways fur naou”

Melville hasn’t spoken much throughout the game.

The reason was that she had a strange way of speaking that only Lapis Lazuline could understand.

While in short sentences she could influence her accent to be understandable, if she actually tried to speak a sentence fully, she’d have trouble.

Lapis Lazuline hugged Melville and cried on her shoulder.

Then, she translated what Melville said to Detick Bell.

“S-She said, Cherny’s dead, so it’s for the best that she leave us for now.”

Melville’s eyes looked sad, but she didn’t show it.

Detick Bell was thinking of her next words. She didn’t want to upset Lazuline further, but she had to confront Melville about this sudden change.

And for some reason, Detick Bell felt like she knew the reason why Melville was leaving.

“Melville, you’re saying you don’t trust us, is that right? You think one of us is Cherna’s killer.”

Bell’s words were cold.

Melville’s eyes were distant.

“That’s why you’re leaving us, right? That’s why you’re going away. I won’t stop you, but I
want to know if that’s the reason.”

Melville made no emotion

“…Nya?”

She said so as she smiled.

“Sou, what do you think, Bell? Sumeoan frum our team was killed. Sumeoan clearly had killed har. One of aus?”

“…What do you think, Bellsy? Someone from our team was killed. Was it one of us?”

“No. Impossible. None of us did that, right?” asked Detick Bell.

“I wouldn’t kill Cherny!!! Bellsie is trying to figure out the bad guy! Melly, please don’t leave!” cried Lazuline.

Melville nodded.

“Then that leaves oan culprit. The Master”

“Melville… what are you suggesting?”

“It’s not sef to stay in teems anymore, so I’m leaving.”

“She says it’s not safe, so she’s leaving us”

What Melville said makes some sense. Cherna Mouse’s death was very suspicious. No Magical Girl is able to tamper with Magical Phones.

So the only logical explanation was the Master, who would have control of the full game.

The facts:

Cherna Mouse has died.

Cherna Mouse died because someone messed with her Magical Phone.

No Magical Girl can alter the Magical Phones.

Normally they *could*, but not in this game.

Which means the Game Master controls the game world.

Since the Master can seemingly control the world, then the only one that *could* alter the phone is the Master.

Logically…

…The one that altered the Magical Phone is the Master.

Detick Bell's face was uneasy.

"Bell. Pfle chack the amount of kyandi. We both chek the amount. Same, ne? But after Cherna died, they're differaunt. Hao?"

"Bellsie… Pfle herself checked the amount. We both checked the amount. They're the same, and then they're different. You can't explain that"

"Faru was surprised, ne? He didn't knao"

"Fal himself was surprised. He didn't know"

Detick Bell folded her hands and asked,

"But if the Master was the killer, than why doesn't she just kill us all?"

Melville looked up.

"Bekaus, she needed an accomplish"

"Because she needed an accomplice"

"Who wasn't in the skware when we were ool there?"

"Who wasn't in the Town Square when we were all there?"

Detick Bell's eyes widened.

"Melville… Are you saying it's Genopsycho?"

"Genosaiko is not thaer, but shi is not dead, ne?"

"Genny wasn't there, but she wasn't dead, right?"

“I’m leaving bekaws I’m going to find her”

“Melly’s leaving because she’s going to find her”

Melville spoke, Lazuline translated, Detick Bell tried to process this information.

Genopsycho as the Master’s accomplice? Was she a traitor all this time.

Melville stopped talking.

Slowly, her body began disappearing. She was blending into the environment, as she became completely invisible.

Lazuline was shocked, and tried to reach out, touching nothing. She ran across the grave, but Melville wasn’t there anymore.

“Melly!? Melly!!!”

She was gone.

Detick Bell checked her Magical Phone. She went to her own team. Team Bell.

She checked the members.

Detick Bell.

Lapis Lazuline.

Cherna Mouse.

No Melville. Her name has disappeared. She’s withdrawn from her team entirely.

“Lazuline”

“Yes? What is it Bellsie?”

“Could I check your Magical Phone for a bit?”

Lazuline gave Bell her Magical Phone. When Detick Bell checked the status, sure enough, there was no Melville on her team.

Cherna Mouse’s name was red, meaning she had died.

So Detick Bell and Lapis Lazuline were on their own.

Detick Bell returned Lazuline's phone.

"Hey, Bellsie… Melly's looking for the killer right? Do you think she'll find whoever it is?"

Detick Bell didn't have an answer.

Bell bit her lip.

"Bellsie… Y'know, Melly asked me to come, when she left."

"She did?"

"She talked about it while we were burying Cherny with me. I didn't want to go with her if you're not going. I'm not leaving you behind, Bellsie. We're a team"

Detick Bell smiled.

So Melville had asked Lazuline to come.

That means the real reason that Melville left the team was because of Detick Bell.

That makes sense.

Detick Bell wasn't that good of a leader. Although she was a leader, the truth of the matter is that Melville seemed to do a lot more.

Cherna Mouse took orders only from Melville.

Detick Bell's Magical Skill is useless in the game. None of the buildings will offer her any information.

Detick Bell hasn't done much fighting.

As a Team Leader, she had nothing to offer that her team can, except for one thing, experience.

The only think Detick Bell felt like she had over the other Magical Girls is her experience in the real world, both as a real detective and as a Magical Girl.

But that didn’t change the fact that she was Team Leader in name only.

Melville didn’t trust Detick Bell.

Cherna Mouse ignored Bell’s orders.

Only Lazuline actually felt like Bell was part of the team.

“Bellsie, if Cherny’s killer’s still out there, we gotta keep a close eye for ‘em, okay?”

With eyes filled with determination, Lapis Lazuline punded her chest and puffed it out, one hand on her hip.

“Don’t worry, Bellsie! As long as Lapis Lazuline is with you, you’ll be safe! I promise!!!”

Then, Detick Bell was brought back into reality.

Her apartment walls surrounded her. It was a familiar sight. One that Detick Bell was never sure that she’ll return to.

The first thing Detick Bell did when she arrived back home was to call her director. She announced a 10-day vacation.

This was going to take a long time.

Next, she took out her Magical Phone. Now that she’s in the real world, she can finally do some investigation.

She found Lapis Lazuline’s profile, and her phone number as well.

Since Melville is no longer registered to her team, her contact was deleted.

Cross-referencing the area code with the list of areas in the city pinpointed Lazuline’s possible location.

Just like Magical Daisy before, Detick Bell is going to investigate Lazuline.

It’s not that she didn’t trust Lazuline, but she had to make sure.

What Melville said wasn’t wrong. It’s possible that the Master is working with an

accomplice.

So, Bell had to remove any and all suspicion from Lapis Lazuline before she could focus on other Magical Girls.

If she can do this fast, she can probably discover the identity of the traitor.

Her Magical Skill was useless in the game, but in real life, buildings would be more talkative.

Detick Bell's investigation starts once more.

☆ Pechika

When the game restarts, everyone always appears in the Wasteland Area.

This has happened twice now, and Pechika feels like it won't change.

She instinctively went towards Clantail's general location.

The blazing heat, the barren landscape, the crumbling buildings litter the area.

Clantail and Pechika finally met up once more.

"Pechika. Long time no see"

"Yeah"

Clantail squats on her deer legs and turns her back to Pechika, motioning at her to ride.

Pechika gently climbs into a comfortable position on top of Clantail's horse body, and Clantail begins walking.

Pechika has gotten used to this. Though she never really took the time to appreciate her teammates. She always seemed so worried about herself.

"Clantail"

"Hm?"

“I never really noticed until now, but you’ve got beautiful fur, and it really feels nice”

Clantail had no response, and her head went straight forward.

Pechika felt Clantail’s horse body heat up slightly, and could see that Clantail’s cheeks reddened a bit.

Pechika tensed up.

“So-Sorry! I didn’t mean it like that, I was just… Um…”

“No, it’s fine, Pechika. Thank you”

“H-Huh? Oh? Y-You’re welcome, yeah”

Then, Clantail, blushing, had her face down.

“And… Likewise, Pechika. Thank you for all the food you’ve given us. I really appreciate it”

Pechika nodded and smiled. Though Clantail said it with a whisper of a voice, Pechika picked it up just fine.

Suddenly, Clantail saw a dragon swoop down from the sky. Clantail summoned her spear and readied herself for attacking.

But from the back of the dragon, came a familiar Magical Girl.

“There you are!!!”

Miyokata Nonako had jumped down from the dragon.

“Long time no see, *you two*!”

She ran over to Pechika and squeezed her while spinning around.

“Hahahahaha, *High Tension!!!*”

She spun and spun and spun. Pechika felt like she was going to barf.

Miyokata put Pechika down.

Pechika grasped for air.

“Oh… Too much *tension*? Hahahaha!”

“Haha… I’m fine, Miyokata. It’s nice to see you again.”

The dragon watched anxiously.

“*No problem*! Now we must have to find the *Real Doll* Magical Girl!”

The three Magical Girls walked over to Leonetta’s location.

Clantail was quiet.

Miyokata was talkative.

Even though they realize their current situation, they’ve grown closer together, and are in a good mood.

They’re clearly happy to see each other.

Finally, they arrived to Leonetta’s location.

“Hrmm, why did you guys make me wait all the way out here? You three are so slow”

Leonetta said while wiggling her index finger to the 3 girls.

“It’s good to see you, Leonetta” said Pechika.

“Hm? Oh… yeah, nice meeting you again,” Leonetta said sheepishly.

“Hoo, what’s this? No words of abuse? No argument? No anger? Leonetta’s truly *changed*! Hahaha!” Miyokata said, laughing heartily.

“Hey, what’s that supposed to mean?”

“Oh, nothing, hahaha!”

Pechika rode on Clantail’s back, while Miyokata and Leonetta rode on Miyokata’s new dragon friend.

They ran towards the Underground Area to pick up where they left off.

In this Area, they've returned to hunting dragons. They've become significantly easier to deal with.

Now that Team Clantail understood the best way to handle them.

Miyokata's dragon would combat other dragons, while Leonetta and Clantail would work together to take down another.

Multiple dragons of multiple colors dropped different items and Magical Candy.

With Cherna Mouse gone, it certainly was easier to go hunting, but Cherna Mouse's death was still unfortunate.

Pechika would prefer that Cherna stayed alive and worked together.

Whenever they needed rest, Pechika was ready with food well prepared ahead of time.

The three are like family now.

Whenever they ate Pechika's food, Leonetta and Miyokata would have a dreamy look and an excited smile.

Clantail would always look reserved, but her tail would always wag. Pechika always chuckled when she saw that.

She wouldn't mind if they continued on after they leave this game.

They spent most of their time collecting hints and figuring out how to advance in the game.

The hints that they collected were thus,

'Within the Underground Area exists a legendary dragon, known as the Dragon King'.

'You will recognize the Dragon King by his red horns and elaborate royal scales'.

'The Dragon King rests directly beneath the Underground Town.'

'Killing the Dragon King will grant you a Large Shield'

‘As well as insight to the past’.

“*King*? There’s a Dragon King?” asked Miyokata.

“There’s probably a lot of Magical Candies that he’ll drop. We’ll find him if we have time.”

Though they collected any hints they can, most of Team Clantail’s purpose was hunting for Magical Candies, so they tend to leave Area Clearing missions to other parties.

It’s lunch break now, and Pechika’s prepared a treat.

Her food had been lavish, and she wasted no time in preparing a meal worthy of celebrating.

“Pechika, thank you so much for making me a *hamburger*! I haven’t had this for a long time!”

“It’s no problem, Miyokata”

The other two was chewing their food happily.

“Y’know, you ever think it’s kind of been a slow day for us all?”

“Slow? Only you would complain about that, Leonetta!”

Leonetta ignored Miyokata’s words and continued munching on her lunch.

“Hmm, yes, it’s certainly been eventless, but that should be a good thing. That means everything’s going according to plan,” said Clantail with a calm expression.

“More importantly! Pechika, what did you use to make this *hamburger*?”

Pechika noticed the question asked by Miyokata.

“Huh? Oh, uh, just a regular bun I got from the store, heh”

“*Nice*!”

Miyokata gave a thumb’s up.

Pechika felt like a mother to these 3, feeding them, making sure they're happy. This was a nice feeling.

Then, Clantail's Magical Phone rang.

But none of the other phones rang, so it couldn't be from Fal.

Clantail checked her phone. It was a text message from Pfle.

'*We figured out the Area Clear mission. Unfortunately, it's impossible with just a few of us. We need to cooperate.*'

Clantail showed the screen to the group.

Leonetta smiled.

"Finally, some action! And we get to go to the next area, too!"

☆ Nokko-Chan

Cherna Mouse's death was impossible to determine.

It would require tampering with her Magical Phone. Something that nobody seemed to do.

Certainly, Nokko-Chan never touched the phone. She didn't think anyone else did.

The most she's heard is that people are saying that the Master of the game is the one that's committed the crime.

However, that doesn't make any sense.

The Master would be willing to kill Cherna Mouse just like that? Then what's the point of keeping her alive in the beginning?

The motivation didn't seem like the motivations of a Master.

If you think about it, Cherna Mouse was a problem for most teams. There were probably several Magical Girls that didn't like Cherna.

In fact, Cherna had become so much of a problem that Pfle wanted to get her to stop guarding the hunting grounds.

Unfortunately, Pfle lost that duel.

That wasn't just unfortunate for Pfle, but also for Cherna. That duel must have made Cherna a huge target.

Since no one is able to beat Cherna fairly, they'd have to resort to finding other ways to eliminate her.

But why would they eliminate Cherna?

It's true that individually, Cherna Mouse was undefeated, but it's not like she was *that* huge of a problem.

More than that, the way she was killed seems impossible from a player's standpoint.

It would require some kind of way to manipulate the Magical Phones.

No player could kill Cherna Mouse in the way she was killed.

There's no reason for the Master to suddenly kill Cherna Mouse.

The whole thing seems very contradictory, and Nokko-Chan would rather leave that to people like Detick Bell or Pfle.

For now, she and @NyanNyan are hunting dragons.

Of course, that's their *main* objective. Their secondary objective is the same as before.

Find Genopsycho.

Nokko-Chan had checked in with other team members. She asked them to contact her if
they find any sign of Genopsycho.

It's a long shot, but she might still be out there.

If she had re-logged in, then she would've restarted at the Wasteland Area.

"I think there's something preventing Genopsycho from finding us, Ru. I don't know what

it is, but I'm sure we'll find her"

@NyanNyan was positive.

Good. No need to use Nokko-Chan's powers. This is some good development.

They can just focus on killing the dragons.

While @NyanNyan would do the offensive attacks, Nokko-Chan would be influencing the
dragon's emotions.

Conflict in emotions creates stress, and feelings of rage, sadness, and confusion are the
best recipe to keep the dragons they hunt mentally unbalanced.

After one of these hunts, Nokko-Chan received a message from Pfle.

'*We figured out the Area Clear mission. Unfortunately, it's impossible with just a few of us. We need to cooperate.*'

Nokko-Chan showed the screen to @NyanNyan.

"What do you think? Are we going?"

"Of course, Ru! We'll tip the strength of the team in our favor!"

@NyanNyan puffed out her chest. She stood valiantly. She looked fearless, with a determined look in her eyes.

That's how she looked on the outside.

However, Nokko-Chan is a master of emotions.

Inside, @NyanNyan felt a little nervous and anxious.

Nokko-Chan didn't know the reason, but @NyanNyan is hiding something, or maybe she
knows something.

For now, Nokko-Chan wouldn't act on that.

The Underground Town looks the same as the other towns. At least in layout.

Of course, the buildings weren't really buildings, but stone-looking building shapes.

The windows didn't have window panels. They were just holes in the buildings.

Unlike other areas, this area is humid, and smells of damp rock and mold.

Nokko-Chan would not want to live here for anything.

The shop as usual had higher grades of items, but other than that, there's not much difference.

This was where the Magical Girls gathered.

Centaur, Doll, Priestess, Chef.

Team Clantail.

Full team.

On the other side, Detick Bell and Lapis Lazuline. Team Bell.

Sitting on a stone outcropping was Melville, who apparently has quit Team Bell.

Finally, two other Magical Girls.

Pfle, on the back of a black dressed nurse, Shadow Gale.

"Well, hello everyone. Glad you could all make it" said Pfle while piggybacking on Shadow Gale.

"Pfle… Your wheelchair isn't fixed yet, Ru?"

"I'm afraid that's an impossibility. For now, we need to focus on clearing the game. Things like my wheelchair can wait."

At first Nokko-Chan questioned if Pfle was putting Shadow Gale in strain. Then she remembered that Shadow Gale was a Magical Girl.

Carrying another human, even if she's a Magical Girl, wouldn't really require much strength.

In fact, Nokko-Chan would think that Shadow Gale would still be able to fight, so long as Pfle held on to Shadow Gale's back and Shadow Gale's arms were free.

Pfle looked around the area, and once she's confirmed that everyone's present, she nodded.

"Alright. The Area Clear event is a little tricky, so follow me and I'll show you."

On cue, Shadow Gale began walking to one of the many cave networks.

The other Magical Girls followed.

Because of the structure of the caverns, they couldn't follow too widely. Instead, they were in a straight and narrow line.

Nokko-Chan had a scary thought. If the criminal was still here, walking with them, then it would be easy for them to kill the person in front of them, whose back was vulnerable.

But that would be stupid. They would just endanger themselves. Even if they killed one of them, they'd have to fight 9 other Magical Girls.

Finally, Shadow Gale reached a dead end.

"Okay, I'd like you all to follow my lead," said Pfle.

She took out some glasses from her pocket and began wearing them. Nodding, she pointed towards the wall to Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale walked, and continued towards the wall.

Suddenly, her body seemed to phase through it.

The other girls were shocked.

But then Pfle's head appeared through from the other side of the wall.

"It's a fake. Come through it. There's no dead end. Do be careful, as it's very narrow."

Clantail looked around, and nervously went first.

She tried to grasp her hand on the wall but it just went through like air. After hesitating,

she passed through the wall.

Nokko-Chan followed along, going through the wall.

A feeling like going through thick fog.

At the other side were smooth walls and floors. This part of the room doesn't look like any natural cavern, but a man-made hall.

Shadow Gale continued forward. There were spiral staircases leading downwards.

Nokko-Chan followed down and down and down.

As she continued downwards, it became harder to breathe, but Nokko-Chan managed.

Finally, Shadow Gale stopped at a large circular arena.

Nokko-Chan stopped next to Shadow Gale, but what she saw in that arena made her take a deep breath and cover her mouth.

A large, gigantic, monster of a dragon.

Scales unlike any she's seen. Feathers in some parts of the dragon, claws that were about the size of Nokko-Chan, and wings that extend meters away.

Other Magical Girls were shocked and were on their guard.

But Pfle and Shadow Gale were calm.

"Do not worry. It's safe here," reassured Pfle.

Nokko-Chan noticed an equilateral red line on the ground, in a circle around the dragon.

"What's this?" Asked Nokko-Chan.

"Go ahead. Throw something over it."

Nokko-Chan grabbed a loose stone and threw it over the red line.

Immediately, the dragon's eyes widened, perked up, and opened its mouth. A large fireball manifested from its throat and is launched towards the stone.

Nokko-Chan jumped away sideways as she saw the fireball headed straight towards her,
but the fireball simply disintegrated when it reached the red line.

The stone she threw was completely gone.

"As long as we stay behind that line, the dragon won't attack us. Now, *that* is the gate to the next area."

Pfle pointed to a ladder extended just above the dragon.

"To get to *that*, we have to go through *him*," finished Pfle.

"How the hell are we supposed to beat *that* thing?" screamed Leonetta.

Pfle took out her Magical Phone.

"I have a plan, but we'll need to cooperate."

Pfle opened the *Monster Picture Book*, scrolled to the entry titled *Great Dragon*, and showed the page to everyone.

Most of the categories were labeled '???', but one was known,

Attribute: Fire

"This is our first boss-type enemy. We know its attribute is Fire, which means that Water Amulets will reduce its damage. Furthermore, everyone here has purchased a Shield +5, correct?"

The Magical Girls all nodded.

"Good. We've experimented, and we learned that if you wear a Water Amulet, and have a Shield +5 with you, then it should completely nullify the Great Dragon's fireball attack."

The Magical Girls looked at each other.

"Does it really work?" asked Detick Bell.

“Yes. Guaranteed,” replied Shadow Gale.

Nokko-Chan wondered if Shadow Gale tested it herself.

Pfle continued,

“Now, as for killing the Great Dragon. There are a couple of options, and we’ll be using all of them. Earlier today, Shadow Gale and I purchased this weapon.”

Pfle took out a small knife from her Magical Phone. It wasn’t impressive looking or elaborate. Just a small knife.

“This is a *Dragon*-specific killer weapon. Its damage is multiplied when fighting *Dragon* opponents. If we can stab its vitals with this, then it will die. Of course that means getting
close.”

The Magical Girls all looked nervous at that thought. Pfle continued,

“Nyan Nyan, a question. Do you still have scrolls with buildings sealed inside?”

“Huh? Yeah, Ru.” Answered @NyanNyan abruptly.

“Good. How much distance can you throw the scroll?”

“…Um… Quite a long one, Ru.”

@NyanNyan’s answer was subdued. She might have remembered that time when she crushed that Samurai girl.

Pfle nodded.

“Then the knife wielder will attack from the right, @NyanNyan will drop a building from the left. That *should* also kill the Great Dragon. The rest of us need to distract it by providing support with our weapons. Now, who wants the knife?”

All the Magical Girls were silent and nervous. Although nobody raised their hand, Nokko-Chan asked a question.

“…What about clear rewards. What about the money we’ll get?” asked Nokko-Chan.

Her goal after all was to get enough money to help her mother. It was a reasonable

request.

Pfle calmly replied,

“The money and candy reward will be equally awarded to all of us. It’s only fair. However,
the Great Dragon will possibly drop one rare item. I suggest we give that item to its killer.

Is that a deal?”

The Magical Girls looked at each other and slowly nodded.

Then Clantail walked over.

“Then I’ll take the knife,” she said.

Pfle nodded and gave her the *Dragon* knife.

“Alright, let’s get into positions behind the red line.”

All the Magical Girls were ready. They equipped Water Amulets and Shield +5.

Clantail and Nokko-Chan were on opposite ends of the dragon.

Melville was providing long-range support with her large bow and harpoon.

Pfle is still on Shadow Gale, but she is ready to fight.

“Alright, on my mark… eh?”

Suddenly, there was someone at the entrance.

A B-movie looking sci-fi suit.

Her visor was pulled down.

@NyanNyan screamed out.

“Genopsycho!!!”

She ran over to her and immediately hugged her.

Genopsycho's visor was still down. Did she heal her wounds? Were they still there? Why
was she here now of all times.

Genopsycho laughed and returned the hug.

The two Magical Girls were hugging each other very tightly, and moving around, spinning around erratically.

They spun and spun…

…They tumbled down…

…They rolled over the red line.

The dragon reacted fast. It launched a great big fireball at the two Magical Girls.

As soon as it did that, three arrow shots hit its throat, and the dragon roared in pain. Melville had taken her chance.

"Everyone, move *now*!" said Pfle, slightly shocked at this development.

As the fireball continued to blaze through to the two Magical Girls prone on the ground, the other Magical Girls ran over to attack the Great Dragon.

As long as they stick to the plan, they should win…

Master's Side
Part 5

"Fal?"

No answer.

"Faaaal?"

The girl with glasses called out. Her room was empty, save for the light of the monitors and her Magical Phone.

No voice answered her back.

She adjusted her glasses and grabbed her smartphone.

“Oh Fal… to think you would betray your Master. I can’t say I didn’t see this coming, hmhmhm…”

She pressed some buttons, but of course, there was no Fal on the screen.

“Cyber Fairy familiars are known to cause trouble for their Masters. There was a solution, a patch that would forcefully make you obedient, but I never applied it to you. I guess that was my fault… Oh well, what can you do.”

She put down her Magical Phone and put both her legs on the table.

She grabbed her Rubik’s Cube and began playing with it.

“I know you can hear me though, Fal. Are you still delusional about me *killing* everyone? I told you, I only set the stage and let the girls handle the rest. I’m blameless in this situation. So what *are* you going to do, Fal? Run back to the Land of Magic? Where *is* the Land of Magic? I thought you said they were sending someone? Well, where is she, Fal?”

Crash!

The door to the girl’s room slammed open.

The girl with glasses turned her chair around.

Standing on the doorway was a white Magical Girl.

She had platinum blonde hair, a middle school looking sailor uniform, flowers on her hair
and her skirt, a familiar sight.

The girl with glasses grinned. Her grin turned to laughter. She was overjoyed.

“Ahahaha…”

She looked at the white Magical Girl and beckoned her to come inside.

“Welcome to my world! It’s nice to finally meet you, Snow White.”

Chapter 6:
Negative and Positive

☆Detick Bell

“Everyone, move, *now*!”

Pfle’s voice echoed loudly, and all the Magical Girls moved as one.

Bell saw Nokko-Chan running over to @NyanNyan and Genopsycho. She tried to slide over to them, carrying a large shield.

Unfortunatey, the large flaming fireball engulfed Genopsycho and @NyanNyan, and Nokko-Chan
immediately raised her shield to protect herself.

The impact of the fireball on Nokko-Chan’s shield sent her flying towards a wall.

Detick Bell ran with her wits about her. Holding her own shield, she prayed that the dragon won’t notice her, but at the same time, she’s running towards the dragon.

The dragon’s reaction was fast. It snapped its view to Bell and launched a large fireball at her.

Bell’s reaction wasn’t fast enough. She was running too *towards* the fireball.

Suddenly, sparks of blue appeared in front of Detick Bell, and from it, came Lapis Lazuline, teleporting in front of her, shield at the ready. She pushed Bell away, and prepared to block the fireball.

She blocked the fireball head on, but the impact was still large. It pushed her back as she balanced herself. She finally skidded to a halt and dropped to one knee.

Bell, now on the ground, instantly went back up and ran towards the dragon.

She was supposed to be the distraction. The distraction so that Clantail could attack the Great Dragon with her knife.

She ran again towards the dragon, shield at the ready in front of her. The dragon wasted no second and fired a fireball at Detick Bell.

This time, she was prepared. She raised her shield at the ready, and blocked the fire.

The first thing she felt was a large impact, then sparks of fire burned her. Sparks that flew past the shield, hitting her arms and face. She had to tough it out as it began to dissipate, but it took all her strength to stay standing.

Then, she heard a large thud, a scream, and a crash in the floor.

Sprawled on the ground was Clantail. Her lower body was that of a Grasshopper. Based on what happened, she may have been trying to jump towards the dragon, and was swatted by the tail.

But how? The dragon was clearly distracted by Detick Bell. How did it know where Clantail was going to strike?

Then, the dragon… smiled? It was… laughing. Wait, did the dragon… understand them?

Pfle spoke her plan right in front of the dragon. The Magical Girls assumed that the dragon was unintelligent, but what if it understood their language.

It knew about the plan before they even launched it.

Even though it doesn't care about anything past the red line, it can still see and hear them.

The dragon was now about to move towards Clantail. Bell couldn't possibly reach her in time.

Nokko-Chan was trying to heal @NyanNyan and Genopsycho. The rest of Clantail's team attempted to run to Clantail.

The dragon breathed fire, hurtling towards Clantail's collapsed body. Then, another blue shard…

Lazuline had teleported near Clantail and shielded Clantail with her shield.

The flames were streaming towards them both. The dragon was relentless. Even though they can resist, The heat and pressure would be too much for Lazuline.

Then, a large harpoon was launched towards the dragon's throat, and another towards its tail. Roaring in anger, the dragon saw the source of the attack.

Melville.

The dragon launched a fireball at her, but Melville was well out of range behind the red line. She
was safe. Then, the dragon looked down to where Lazuline was. It saw Lazuline… but no Clantail.

But Bell saw it. Bell saw the ceiling. Hanging on the ceiling, upside down, was Clantail, with the body of a Gecko.

With the dragon confused, Clantail dropped down and slammed the knife towards the dragon's head, piercing its brain.

She didn't just do that, she sliced it vertically until it bled the dragon from head to neck. Then, and only then did she jump away.

It's been two hours since the Great Dragon died. According to the game world, after that time, any monsters of NPCs will disappear.

Sure enough, the Great Dragon's corpse simply vanished. All the blood as well. Only the black soot of the flames remain.

The Magical Girls were resting. The fight took a lot out of them. They'll climb that ladder to the next area soon enough.

In the circular arena, two Magical Girls were lain next to each other. They had been placed on their backs, and Nokko-Chan was crouching next to them, crying.

Detick Bell approached the two bodies. Nokko-Chan looked up to Detick Bell and nodded, and she walked away.

Detick Bell had to perform an autopsy. Genopsycho's suit is fine, it's invincible. However, her visor was somehow lifted, perhaps during
that tumble.

@NyanNyan's condition was worse. Most of her body is burnt and charred black. However, she wasn't burnt to soot, probably because of the Water Amulet she wore, which slightly reduced the attack, but not enough.

The official cause of death would be the burning of the dragon, but why did Genopsycho twirl and tumble across the red line?

Why was she here in the first place? Was she following them?

Genopsycho may have thought she could survive a blast with her suit, and technically, she should. That suit withstood lava, according to Nokko-Chan.

This all made no sense. Then Bell remembered Melville's words. There was a traitor among them.

Bell didn't want to believe it, but was Genopsycho the traitor? Was she trying to get @NyanNyan killed and make it look like an accident?

And if that's true, did they finally get rid of the killer amongst them?

Shadow Gale approached Detick Bell, Pfle piggybacking behind her.

"How are they?" asked Pfle.

"Both gone. The fire killed both, I believe."

Pfle nodded gravely.

"I had hoped that when we find Genopsycho, we'd be able to get some answers, however, Genopsycho's sudden appearance raises more questions instead."

Detick Bell agreed with Pfle. This was certainly a highly coincidental and unfortunate Appearance. The two were interrupted by Nokko-Chan, who sheepishly walked between Shadow Gale and Bell.

"…Um, I know you two must be discussing something important, but… If it's alright with you. I'd

like to bury them. I borrowed a shovel from Pechika's team. Could you help me?"

Pfle, Shadow Gale, and Detick Bell looked at each other, then at Nokko-Chan, whose face was stained red and wet with tears.

The 3 Magical Girls nodded.

☆ Nokko-Chan

Nokko-Chan had been crouched in a corner while Detick Bell, Shadow Gale, and Pfle were looking over the bodies of her friends.

She had been crying.

@NyanNyan and Genopsycho were gone.

Her team was gone.

She was the only one left.

She didn't think this would happen, but it happened like this. Now she has to toughen up and go it alone once more.

Clantail had approached her slowly. She took out her Magical Phone, and transferred something to Nokko-Chan.

Nokko-Chan looked at her own Magical Phone.

A shovel.

"Use that. You should be the one to do it," said Clantail with a somber voice.

Nokko-Chan nodded, and walked to the three Magical Girls.

"…Um, I know you two must be discussing something important, but… If it's alright with you. I'd like to bury them. I borrowed a shovel from Pechika's team. Could you help me?"

Pfle, Shadow Gale, and Detick Bell looked at each other, then at Nokko-Chan, whose face was stained red and wet with tears.

The 3 Magical Girls nodded.

With the help of the other Magical Girls, they travelled all the way to the Wasteland Area.

To the gravesites of their former comrades just outside of the Town.

Nokko-Chan had begun digging. She dug fast, and she dug without emotion. She was

suppressing it.

Genopsycho's body was nearly unrecognizable, and @NyanNyan was also in horrible shape. Nokko-Chan didn't want to think about it.

As she dug, she noticed how sturdy this shovel is. Even with the brute strength of a Magical Girl, it was able to withstand and not break.

The blue Magical Girl, Lapis Lazuline, approached her.

"Hey… y'know, I could dig for you," she offered.

"It's fine. It should be me. Please just… let me be"

"But-"

Before Lazuline could finish, Detick Bell grabbed her shoulder and shook her head.

Lapis Lazuline nodded and walked away.

Nokko-Chan had known how to dig graves when Magical Daisy died.

Now, Nokko-Chan was the only one in her team.

It's her responsibility.

She should be the one to do it.

After digging the graves, Nokko-Chan put their bodies inside. She covered it up, and she
used some makeshift stones to mark them as gravestones.

They weren't perfect, but they'll do.

Lapis Lazuline approached Nokko-Chan again.

"I'm sorry for what happened. If there's anything you need, lemme know, okay?"

Nokko-Chan simply nodded, and hugged Lazuline whilst crying again.

The blistering heat of the Wasteland Area had been unbearable, but Nokko-Chan hadn't noticed it until now.

She looked back at the row of tombstones.

6 graves. One for each dying Magical Girl.

6 Magical Girls have died, only 10 remain.

☆ Shadow Gale

The walk back to the Underground Area was a long one, but Shadow Gale didn't care.

With Pfle on her back, Shadow Gale continued forward, the other Magical Girls behind her.

After a long trek, they decided to take a rest at the circular arena before heading up the rope ladder to the next area.

Even though Magical Girls don't run out of endurance easily, mentally, they were all worn
out.

All of them decided that a nice quiet peace would be a great change.

Shadow Gale picked a nice spot where she sat with Pfle in the corner of the room.

All this death, all this suffering, and for what?

Shadow Gale felt… sad. Sad that she can't do much to help out the other Magical Girls, sad that she couldn't stop the events that were happening.

She was mentally tired. She needed some rest.

She rested her eyes for a bit after laying Pfle down.

After quite some time, she heard Pfle whispering over to her.

"Mamori, you seem to be in a sentimental mood, aren't you?"

Mamori's eyes opened, still lying down.

“So are you supposed to be a mind reader now?”

“Now now, Mamori. We grew up together. I know you as much as you know me. It’s okay
to feel sad about what’s happened, you know?”

“Sure, but talking about it won’t change anything.”

She could feel Pfle smiling.

“Mamori, you should express yourself more”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you really like carrying me around all the time? It’s not tiring at all for you?”

“We don’t get tired”

“That’s not what I mean”

“You need to be carried”

“Mmm, but you’re saving up candies to hopefully create me a new wheelchair it seems. Right? So, you must not like carrying me around”

“That’s not why I’m getting you a new wheelchair, I’m doing it so you can be back in your
wheelchair, my lady.”

“I bet I must have been like an old man, one who can’t do anything much by herself, right? It’s silly to see me being carried around like that, don’t you think?” Pfle said, a smile still on her face.

“My lady, no. The fact is, it’s not dangerous for me, and it’s safe for you, and it puts no strain on me. I’m doing my job”

“…But do you like it?”

“Why does it even matter?”

“Because what you feel does matter, Mamori”

Shadow Gale fell silent.

After a few seconds of silence, she replied.

“We should continue on. We’ve gotten enough rest. Whenever you’re ready, my lady.”

Shadow Gale carried Pfle once again, and she began climbing the rope ladder.

Pfle’s weight hadn’t bothered her, but the actual travel up the ladder and ahead have been bothersome.

After the ladder, there was a small tunnel that required her to crawl around.

After that, there was a cliff that she had to climb. Looks like she hasn’t quite reached the next area yet.

But she powered through these, and her Magical Girl endurance made sure that she could.

Finally, she reached an area where there were some trees. The ceilings became significantly higher, and the temperature seemed cooler.

In front of Shadow Gale was what seemed to be a beautiful lake underground.

Shadow Gale was impressed. This was quite a beautiful lake hiding in the midst of this underground area.

In front of her was the gate to the next area. A large wooden door. Luckily, no monsters appeared in this area.

Shadow Gale pushed open the doors and witnessed a large hallway.

The smell of moist and damp water was gone, replaced with a beautiful aroma of carpets, wooden tables, and shelves.

This area was…

…The Library Area.

That was unexpected.

Wasteland, Grassland, Mountain, City, Underground… Library?

The area itself was stocked to the brim with books as far as the eye can see. Shelves reaching up to the ceiling. Tables and chairs positioned everywhere.

“This is wonderful!” yelled Pfle from behind her back.

Shadow Gale found a nice comfy looking chair and sat Pfle down on it. Finally, Pfle could have some comfort.

Shadow Gale grabbed some books from the shelves, and offered it to Pfle.

Strangely, most of them seemed to be blank, which disappointed Pfle.

Nonetheless, Pfle hadn’t forgotten their actual purpose of being here. She took out her Magical Phone, and consulted the Item Picture Book.

“Let’s see what kinds of items we can buy here.”

The first item that they saw on the shop list was a *Magic Carpet*.

It’s a carpet that can transport up to the weight of one adult male. The speed that it can reach is about the average speed of an adult male as well.

Magical Girls can run much faster than that.

But Pfle might want it, since she had no wheelchair anymore.

The width of the carpet changed depending on the area, which made Shadow Gale wonder on how big the Library Area just might be.

The next item on the list is the *Holy Amulet*.

Just like how the Water Amulet in the Underground Area reduced the damage of Fire-based attacks, Holy Amulets reduce the damage of Demonic-based attacks.

Pfle had read that the Library Area’s monsters consist of demons and spirits, which makes the Holy Amulet particularly useful in this case.

Finally, as usual, a weapons and armor section. *Weapon +7*. With the Magical Candies received by the killing of the Great Dragon, they should be able to buy it.

Then, *Shield +7*, plus the drop they had from the Great Dragon. Well, truthfully, it was Clantail that got the drop. However, she has stated that she didn't feel like using a shield,
so she gave it to Pfle, who came up with the coordinated plan.

The *Great Shield*. Its stats are comparable to a *Shield +12*, hopefully enough to stop any
other monster's attacks.

Pfle moved on and looked at the next on the list.

[R].

It still costs 100 candies. With the amount they received from defeating the Great Dragon, they could try a lot.

So they did. They purchased as many [R] items as they could. It cost them most of their candies, but they wanted to wait until they had received a rare item.

3 Maps.

A toothbrush.

A toothpaste.

Some climbing rope.

"Hahaha, our luck hasn't changed, has it?" chuckled Pfle.

The rope was over 50 meters, but was just a normal climbing rope.

One more purchase.

"Oh… Now *this* is interesting."

They had gotten a rare item.

Starting Area Changer.

Pfle consulted the Item Picture Book. This item allowed players in the party to change their starting area, but only to areas they've been to.

This will be useful in the long run.

Pfle decided to call that attempt finished.

Then she moved on to check *Event Items* on the Item Picture Book.

That's when her face froze.

"Mamori"

"Yes, my lady?"

"…It seems that neither @NyanNyan nor Genopsycho were the traitors."

"What do you mean?"

Pfle showed her the counter for the Magical Coin.

(1/1).

"She's still out there. Masked Wonder's killer is still out there."

Shadow Gale sighed, "At this point, I'm not even surprised. We'll keep a lookout."

Pfle nodded, and put her elbows on the table, supporting her head. Her face and a distant look and a smile on it.

Shadow Gale has seen this look before.

On the outside, Pfle looked content, but this was actually the look she made when she believed she was a failure.

When they were in middle school, and Pfle's face was hit with a dodgeball so hard that it
bled, she made that face at home.

When she flunked on a subject she normally was good at, she would make that face.

Now, with the killer still out there, losing the duel, losing her wheelchair, and over 6 Magical Girls dead, she must have felt like more of a failure than before.

Shadow Gale tried to think.

Why did Genopsycho commit suicide, and why did she take @NyanNyan with her.

Even if she didn't know about the red line, she shouldn't have stumbled through to the dragon's arena.

The traitor would still be someone who was alive, right?

While she hated the thought, Shadow Gale also would have to consider Pfle as a possibility as well.

She was the one with the information on the traitor, the one that always was one step ahead, and the one with the most logical explanation.

Could that be a cover-up?

Suddenly, Pfle spoke up.

"I think I have a solution"

"What is it?"

"I suggest dissolving our party"

Shadow Gale lost all the force in her body at that sentence. Her eyes widened as she tried to understand Pfle's intentions, but she can't read Pfle's face at all.

Pfle just smiled.

☆ Pechika

The next area was a Library Area. Gone are the disgusting smells of the Underground area, replaced with the wonderful aroma of books and a nice soothing atmosphere.

Perhaps because Pechika's been in so many libraries before in real life, but she wasn't really expecting mosters to show up.

Libraries are meant for one thing, *knowledge*. So fighting didn't seem to be a thing that could happen here, unlike in the previous areas.

But Pechika is not stupid. This was another area, so she still expected something in the back of her head.

Clantail had once again changed her lower body.

Back in the first few areas, she prefers either a deer or a horse. Then, she became a spider in the Underground area.

Because the Library area was slightly cramped for a large animal, she had the lower form of a monkey.

It's the most human-like body while still not being human.

They purchased the items from the Library shop. *Holy Amulet*. Presumably doing the same thing that the *Water Amulet* did in the Underground Area.

While exploring the Library Area, the team saw what appeared to be a black fog forming.

The black fog changed its shape, morphing into what seemed to be some kind of lion.

Growling, the lion went and kicked Miyokata nearly halfway across the room. Pechika immediately prepared using her *Shield +7*.

Clantail and Leonetta wasted no time. They pounced on the lion, and Leonetta stabbed and sliced her way through it.

Thanks to their *Holy Amulet*, they were able to physically damage this demonic lion.

Finally, they ripped it apart, and it died.

These were the enemies of the Library Area.

Demons, *Devils*. Shape-shifting demonic creatures. Often prefers to shapeshift to animals.

However, Magical Girls are powerful beings. Animals can't hurt them.

Also, there seems to be a unique rule that's only in the Library Area.

Within the entire area are some chairs and desks. It seems that if Magical Girls sit on

these chairs, the monsters won't attack them.

So of course, before exploring a new section, they check to see if there are some chairs around first.

Then, Pechika could safely sit in these chairs while the other 3 deal with any enemies.

It was a better plan than having Pechika wait in the sidelines.

Now, however, it was time to eat.

Pechika had saved up some stones from the Underground Area.

She placed her hands on it and it turned into a delicious meal.

Today's menu, hashed beef.

The 3 Magical Girls all sat down in silence eating.

"You know, I'm wondering. The demons are to be able to *shapeshift* yes? Do you think they can turn into one of us?" asked Miyokata.

Pechika didn't know how to answer that.

She looked over at Clantail, who shrugged while eating.

Leonetta was also no help. She was just munching on her food, enjoying the taste.

Miyokata continued talking, "Well, it was just a thought."

While they were eating, their Magical Phones rang again.

"We're being transported back. Another event. Wasteland Town. Get ready," said

Clantail.

And then their environment changed.

Pechika's mood was strangely very happy.

Perhaps it's because her team's morale was still high, despite what happened.

Genopsycho and @NyanNyan had died.

There was a traitor among the Magical Girls.

Genopsycho and @NyanNyan's deaths were very strange. They hugged each other, and one of them tumbled the other.

Was Genopsycho the traitor? Was @NyanNyan the traitor?

The logic for that is that one of them must have expected suicide.

If *none* of them was the traitor, was it all just an accident? Things like that happen, but…

Pechika wasn't sure.

Fal appeared in the middle of the town square.

"Well, regarding last time's tragic events, we'll go with an easier one today, Pon. Today's
event is a rock-paper-scissors tournament! The winner will receive 1000 Magical Candies, Pon! Good luck!"

That's it? Nothing more?

Pechika was glad.

1000 candies were pretty hard to obtain, but you can do it if you defeated over 10 of those demons in the Library Area.

The tournament began, and Pfle won in the end.

The log-out period was starting, and Pechika took a moment to look at her surroundings.

Nothing much has changed. Melville is alone, acting independently.

In the corner, Detick Bell, Lapis Lazuline, and Pfle (who is apparently riding on a magic carpet???) are talking with Nokko-Chan.

Pechika couldn't hear much of their conversation, but she saw Nokko-Chan sheepishly

nodding.

Pechika also saw Shadow Gale alone.

Curious, Pechika looked at the team list in her Magical Phone.

It seems that Detick Bell, Lazuline, Pfle, and Nokko-Chan have merged into one team.

Was Shadow Gale being abandoned?

It seems that there was some rearrangement that Pechika didn't know about.

At times like this, Pechika looked back to her teammates. Team Clantail had survived intact through many areas, and it looks like they would stay that way.

Pfle then made an announcement.

"I'd like to say that Shadow Gale and I have found what seems to be a hint in the Library Area. I figure it's best that we share it here before we logged out."

All the Magical Girls perked up and listened in.

"The hint states that the Demon Lord's castle would be the next area. If that's so, that means we've reached the endgame. The goal of this game is to kill the Demon Lord, so we should all strive to do that the next time we log in."

All the Magical Girls nodded.

The last area.

Pechika had almost forgotten that the goal of the game was to kill this Demon Lord, whatever that was.

Whatever comes next, Pechika will be prepared.

☆ Nokko-Chan

Noriko had been brought back into reality. Every time this happens, she always has to

check to see if her surroundings were the same.

Once she does, she can ease back into her daily life again.

She wants to visit her mother. Hospitalized, her mother can't really do much, so Noriko always comes to visit whenever she can.

She'd prefer to visit as a Magical Girl too, so she can use her powers.

Normally, that would be hard to do, but for Noriko, it's a special case.

Nokko-Chan looks exactly like Noriko's usual looks. As Nokko-Chan, Noriko is also 10 years old. She simply needs to dye her hair black as Nokko-Chan and no one can tell the difference.

This was also a form of training.

Because she was constantly using her powers, Nokko-Chan's powers grew. Her range increased, the ability to manipulate others' emotions increased.

It's like working out, only for your powers instead of your body.

The hospital was very large. There were many shops in the lobby. Pastry shops, grocery
stores, food shops.

Noriko bought some apples and a nice lunch, and proceeded to head upstairs to the hospital.

Nurses, doctors, and patients greeted her with a smile whenever she passed by.

Noriko always manipulated a happy aura to everyone as she walked by. It's best to do that in a hospital. Gives people hope.

Then, she went to the room she wanted.

She opened the door, and saw a woman in a bed.

"Come in," said the woman.

Noriko came in sheepishly, and offered the woman her lunch.

“Hey mom. I brought you food,” she said.

Noriko’s mother smiled and accepted.

Her eyes were weak, and her cheeks a bit puffy, but she was her mom, and Noriko

would make sure she would get better.

She had been hospitalized for a long time now, and Noriko tried to make ends meet to make sure it pays for the hospital bills.

“Noriko, honey?” said the mom.

“Yes?”

“If something’s bothering you, you can tell me, okay?”

Noriko nodded.

“I will, don’t worry.”

She lied.

She won’t.

She won’t make her mother worry. She’ll make her happy.

Be happy.

Be at ease.

Be calm.

Noriko used her powers to give her mother a sense of bliss. Her mother shouldn’t have to know about what’s going on. She should focus on healing.

That is what’s important.

Noriko spent most of the day with her mother before she had to go back home.

Because Noriko's powers affected the human mind, Noriko had to pay attention to those details.

She understood how the mind works better than anyone.

But there is one thing she couldn't understand.

Why did Genopsycho and @NyanNyan commit suicide? And if it's not suicide, why take the other with them?

Genopsycho's character doesn't match well with any of these options. From the first time
Noriko met Genopsycho, she already understood her personality.

Arrogant, stubborn, but kind and caring. Murder-suicide isn't in her portfolio.

Then there was @NyanNyan. It looked like she was hiding something. She obviously knows something from her past, but couldn't remember.

Could that have motivated her to kill and/or commit suicide, though?

None of their previous personality traits could lead them to these actions.

But there was always a wildcard. Noriko remembered her past family life.

Her mom and dad were always very caring, and then her mother became sick.

Her father decided he couldn't care for both, so he left the family.

A man she thought loved them left them for himself.

Personalities can change.

So did Genopsycho and/or @NyanNyan have a change in personality?

Or were they manipulated?

One thing's for sure, Noriko's original team is gone.

But Detick Bell and Lazuline had invited her to their team.

Pfle had also decided to join. When asked about Shadow Gale, Pfle simply stated,

“We’re going our separate ways for now, we have slightly differing opinions on these”.

Pfle was someone that was very intelligent. She was always one step ahead, and always
willing to show initiative.

Strange behavior for her to switch teams like this. Might be good to keep an eye out.

In 3 days, Noriko will be brought back to the game world. Until then, she will work and get money.

In real life, money was a big issue. After killing the Great Dragon, she had earned a reward and a large sum of money.

Money to pay for living and for her mother.

She was determined to clear the game, to get the money needed for treatment, and to get the money needed to live her daily life as well.

Master’s Side
Part 6

“I think that I *need* to play the villain role, don’t you think? Magical Girls are supposed to be the heroes of the story, so they need a common enemy to fight. That role belongs to me! Haha!”

The girl with glasses laughed as she sat while hugging her knees, wiggling her chair on the long table separating her and the White Magical Girl.

The wobbling chair knocked over the glasses girl’s coffee, and it spilled across the table.

“What do you think, Snow White?” asked the glasses girl.

The White Magical Girl, wearing a sailor schoolgirl uniform, was sitting on the opposite side of the table.

Her eyes were cold, in contrast to her cutesy appearance.

“The Land of Magic wants these Magical Girls free. Do it. Now.”

“Set them free? Of course! They just have to clear the game!”

“I don’t think you understand me. Let them go, *now*.”

“*Now*!? But they’re so close to winning! Hmm… alright, but I have a condition.”

“A condition?”

“Yes. I’ll let them go now, if you tell the Land of Magic to reform the Magical Girl selection
process.”

“What?”

“The process they’re doing now doesn’t produce ideal Magical Girls. Some of those girls are unsuited for protecting the world. How on earth are you going to be able to fight off a large threat if you don’t know if you can fight off each other? Reform the tests to be like yours, and I’ll release the girls.”

“That’s not negotiable.”

“You don’t see the benefits? Look at *you*, Snow White! *Look* at yourself! You’re out here because you passed your test! If you didn’t, you wouldn’t be here! You can’t be the crime
fighting Magical Girl you are now if you didn’t have to fight for your life back *then*!”

“No Magical Girls will be killed by you anymore.”

“*Me*!? I *never* killed anyone! Magical Daisy? She died in an accident! The rest of them killed *each other*. My rules were to *cooperate* to kill the Demon Lord, not kill each other to win. Don’t you see, Snow White? These Magical Girls are not ideal. They’re flawed, so they kill each other whenever they see a chance!”

Snow White stood up,

“We’re done here. You’ll release them right now.”

The Magical Phone on the table powered on.

From it, popped out Fal.

“Snow White! You don’t have much time, Pon! 6 girls have already die-”

Snow White slammed her fist on the phone, and Fal’s projection disappeared.

“You killed *six*!?”

“I told you, I didn’t kill anyone!” said the girl with glasses, smiling.

Snow White brandished her halberd, but something was wrong… She can’t.

The girl with glasses smiled.

“You want to threaten me in *my* world? We’re not in reality, Snow White.”

Snow White focused her mind, but the glasses girl smiled.

“You’re trying to read my mind with your little power? Finding any distress? How cute. I told you, this is *my* world. *My* rules. I can turn off your powers if I want to.”

Snow White’s eyes widened. What was this?

“I never told you my Magical Skill, Snow White. I control cyberspace. I control everything. I am a god here. I can bring you to my little cyberspace network, and you are
at my mercy.”

Snow White’s face was still stoic.

“Do you remember Nemurin? Poor, sweet, Nemurin. She’s like me, only her ability works
in dreams. She could bring people to dreams, and be a god in there as well. Just like my
powers, if Nemurin wanted to, if you died in her dreams, you die in real life too! I bet you never knew about that, did you?” said the girl with glasses, smiling.

The mention of Nemurin made Snow White flinch with anger.

The girl continued,

“You know, I could kill you right now, and you wouldn’t be able to do anything about it,” she said, grinning.

Snow White’s expression didn’t change. She wasn’t afraid of this girl, and she knows this
girl doesn’t fear her as well.

“But I don’t want to kill you, Snow White. I don’t even want to kill my players. I don’t want
to kill anyone. Why should I? I’m here as an ally, not an enemy. I want to be friends, believe it or not.”

The girl poured another cup of coffee into her mug.

“Tell me something, why do you think these girls are killing each other in the game, hm?”

No answer from Snow White.

“It’s because they weren’t raised properly as Magical Girls. That’s why I named this game the *Magical Girl Raising Project*. I got that name from your selection test, by the way, thank you for that,” she said as she sipped a cup of coffee.

She put the cup down, and grinned again.

“My goal is to find the ideal Magical Girl, Snow White. One who will become a champion of justice and a great hero. Just like you.”

Snow White sat down on the chair.

“Your days are numbered. You know that, right? You have the upper hand now, but not for long,” said Snow White.

“I don’t doubt you. After all, the Land of Magic sent their best Magical Girl, *Snow White*! Do you know why you’re the best, Snow White?”

The girl adjusted her glasses.

"…It's because you survived. You're a survivor. You lost close friends, you lost so many,
you saw so much death. You vowed never to let that happen again. Now look at you. Wouldn't the world be a better place with more Magical Girls like you?"

Snow White closed her eyes, fury built up inside of her.

"Do you want to leave? You can't kill me even if you wanted to. The door to reality is behind you. You should come back once you have a plan. I look forward to seeing you again, Snow White."

No choice. Snow White can't win like this. Not now. She had to find a way past this girl.

Snow White stood up, and without saying a word, left the room.

The girl with glasses smiled. She began talking to herself.

"These *children* will be raised properly, Snow White. They'll become ideal Magical Girls. That's my purpose, and that's what I'll do…"

What is the Magical Girl Raising Project? (Demon Lord Edition)

☆ Intuitive for beginners, satisfying for advanced players!

★ Magical Trace System allows you to feel like you're in real life when playing!

☆ High quality graphics! It's on the level of real life!

★ Millions of customizable items! Let your creativity shine!

☆ Best of all, it's Free to Play for *life*!

Welcome to the Magical Girl Raising Project!

Unlike other players, you have a special role, YOU are the Demon Lord!

You're a Magical Girl like any other! However, you hide amongst the other Magical Girls as they try to find you.

Your goal? To kill the other 15 participants.

The reward? 1 Million Yen!

Of course, you'll be rewarded for Clearing Areas and other events too! Keep your wits about you!

You can escape the game if all 15 participants have died. Then, you win the game!

Good luck and have fun!

Chapter 7:
Lazuline's Dream

☆ Pechika

Pechika has 1 Million Yen. This was received when the girls defeated the Great Dragon.

But here's the more important thing. How is she going to explain that she got 1 Million Yen to her family?

Her father, grandfather, and little brother wouldn't understand.

'*Oh, I just won the lottery*'. Impossible.

'*I was in a cooking contest'*. Why didn't you tell us?

'My friends donated money to me over the years'. And you got to a million?

This was going to be harder than she thought.

She was going to clear the game. She was going to clear this game. The endgame is near.

The next area is the Demon's Castle. She was going to clear this game.

…Pechika wondered if she was actually able to escape, or quit.

She turned on her Magical Phone.

"Fal"

"Yes, Pon?"

"What happens if you decide to quit?"

"Huh? Oh… well, you'll get a heart attack, Pon. You'll die. I really don't think that's a good idea."

"So we have to see this through."

"Unfortunately, Pon. You're doing great, so far. I'm sure you'll do fine, Pon!"

"Thanks Fal"

Pechika closed her Magical Phone.

So she had no choice. No escape routes. This was it.

She stayed at the park longer this time.

She wanted to talk with Ninomiya-Kun longer.

She wanted to stay, but time seems to fly by so fast.

Ninomiya-Kun came by. They sat at the park bench. They began their talks with funny stories, and of what happened a few days ago.

It looked like Ninomiya-Kun was having a bad game last night.

He kept missing his swings, and he couldn't hit any of the baseballs. He kept striking out, and his coach yelled at him, called him useless.

But Ninomiya-Kun said that it didn't matter, since he says that he'll always improve.

Always improve, huh?

Pechika had been getting better at defending herself. She still couldn't fight, but she can use her shield pretty well.

Her equipment's upgraded since before, and maybe she'll stand a chance now.

Her team's backed her up since, and they'll continue to do so.

Yeah, maybe she *will* improve. That was a nice thought.

Pechika continued her talk with Ninomiya-Kun far into the night. He had to get home first, and they separated.

Pechika sat at the bench, staring into the night sky, as the stars shone brightly.

☆ Detick Bell

The grass was flowing in the wind. Not a sound to be made, no one around.

Bell continued to walk ahead.

Flower seeds were flowing near her, the wind howling around her.

It was a peaceful night. A good time for thinking. A good time for investigating.

Cherna Mouse is dead.

Melville is missing.

Nokko-Chan had been invited to their team.

Pfle had some quarrel with Shadow Gale.

Bell's party has gone back to 4 people once more.

Although they've restored their numbers, they haven't restored their combat abilities.

Cherna Mouse had been the center of Team Bell's combat. Melville also provided support in combat.

In contrast, Nokko-Chan was not the fighting type, Pfle had no wheelchair, and Detick Bell could barely fight either.

Which means most of the fighting is left to Lapis Lazuline.

Lazuline's strength was overshadowed by Cherna Mouse. She had unbelievable bravery, shown when fighting the Great Dragon.

Lazuline was also a great fighter by herself, it's just that she never got to show her skills because Cherna would always be there, so she never needed to fight.

In fact, during the battle with the Great Dragon, Lazuline nearly sacrificed herself to protect Clantail.

Shielding Clantail had burned a lot of Lazuline, but she didn't mind, she saw herself as a hero.

But she was still one person doing the fighting.

Because of these reasons, Team Bell has become more of a scouting team.

Riding a magic carpet, Pfle would issue instructions to the team while the rest perform at their best.

That was in the game.

In real life, Bell still had something she wanted to do.

Even though she believed with all her heart that Lazuline is innocent, her mind desires proof.

Detick Bell is a detective.

Her job is to investigate and find the facts, and that's what she'll do.

Tokyo suburbs.

The heart of the city.

There were many people walking around to and fro, a variety of age groups and social classes.

Men and women with different jobs and lives, oblivious to each other's situation.

Different from the peaceful aura of the countryside or a small town.

Unlike Magical Daisy, Lapis Lazuline knows what Detick Bell looked like as a Magical Girl, so Detick Bell had been searching under the guise of Shinobu instead.

There was a department and cosmetics store nearby, which Shinobu further used to hide her appearance.

Even though Detick Bell had powers, Shinobu's intelligence as her human form was the same as her Magical Girl form.

Magical Daisy took 3 days to find because of her popularity.

Lazuline would take a bit longer. Shinobu just hoped she could do it in time.

Wherever there was no one around, Shinobu would transform into Detick Bell and use her powers to interrogate the buildings of Tokyo.

It was harder to find Lazuline's whereabouts, but after searching around, several buildings have often seen a figure matching Lazuline's description jumping off buildings and whatnot.

It was then easy enough to trace back to popular locations where Lazuline would be hiding in as a human.

Her search led her to the Entertainment District.

A strange place, but anything's possible, right?

Shinobu followed the traces until she reached a cabaret club.

She asked the owners of the club what seemed to probably be vague questions.

“I’m looking for a young woman.”

It’s not like she knows what Lazuline looks like as a human, and Shinobu’s not very good at drawing facial features, so her search had been hindered a bit.

She looked at her pocket watch, it’s been two and a half days since log-out period.

She wanted to find out Lazuline’s identity *now*.

“Huh?”

A voice was heard from behind Shinobu.

She looked behind her and saw a familiar looking girl.

Blue dress that shone even in darkness.

A dress lined with jewels.

A white fluffy cloak.

A black and white striped tail.

Glossy black hair.

“*Bellsie*!? Is that you!? What are you doing in a place like this?”

A wide smile appeared on the blue girl’s face. There’s no doubt about it, this was Lazuline.

But how did she recognize Shinobu? First of all, she wasn’t even in Magical Girl form, secondly, she swore she had disguised herself, so how…

“Oh my gosh! You came all the way to Tokyo to see me!? Aww, Bellsie!!!”

Shinobu grinned embarrassingly.

She didn’t know what to do.

She just nodded slowly.

“For real!? But how did you know where I lived? Ahh… riiiight, you’re a *detective*! That’s how you found Magical Daisy, right? Now you found out where I lived! Aww, Bellsie, you’re so *cool*!”

So much for Shinobu’s disguises.

“Well then, since you came into all this trouble getting here, do you wanna come over to my house?”

Shinobu was startled.

This was her goal, but she didn’t expect Lazuline to comply so willingly, let alone offer her to come to her house.

Shinobu nodded again.

Lazuline clapped happily.

“Lazuline mooode, *off*!!! Transform!”

You don’t really need to shout to transform back into a human, but Lazuline would be the
type of person to do it.

As a human, Lapis Lazuline looked very different from her Magical Girl form.

A high school girl, about 16 or 17 years old, wearing a blazer from her school, her eyeshadow was blue, and her hair, braided, was colored a reddish maroon.

She looked like a flashy high school girl.

Shinobu remembered girls like these when she was in High School.

It was so out of place for Lazuline to be so bright and cheerful under all of these circumstances.

Shinobu wanted to believe that she wasn’t the traitor. Was she hiding ulterior motives?

“Bellsie!!! You’re lagging behind! C’mon! I’ll walk you over to my house!”

A spunky high school girl. She was already running away.

Shinobu tried to keep up with this girl, but she, in her 20s, could not keep up with this 16-year-old. Especially not in her human form.

Out of breath, Shinobu finally caught up when Lazuline stopped to pet a cat.

“Hey there kitty, kitty! How are you today?” she said, grinning.

The cat purred as Lazuline petted it.

Lazuline looked back at Shinobu,

“C’mon, my apartment’s back here!”

She lived on the 5th floor. It was a nice apartment, but it wasn’t luxurious. A modest place.

Lazuline invited Shinobu to her room.

A simple room with a bed.

“Stay right here, Bellsie! I’ll be back with some food!”

When Lazuline left the room, Shinobu noticed a picture frame of her and what seemed to be Lazuline’s father.

She grabbed it.

Shinobu doesn’t think Lazuline is the traitor anymore. Lazuline was just a spunky high school girl.

But she should still question her about her background, just in case.

“Sorry for the wait! I’m back!”

Shinobu was startled and dropped the frame.

She sheepishly picked it up and put it back on the shelf.

“Ah, that’s a picture of Papa! He works in the mornings and comes home late at night. Er… sorry, but I’ve got some soda and some chips! I’m not exactly a cook, hehe”

“It’s fine,” said Shinobu, as she sat down.

“So, Lazuline… I wanted to ask you. How did you know I was Detick Bell?” asked Shinobu, taking a sip of the soda.

“Isn’t it obvious that it’s you, Bellsie?”

“No, I’m in my human form, I did heavy makeup, I’m virtually unnoticeable.”

“No you’re not. Nobody can hide their facial features. Your eyes, nose, mouth, the shape. Even if you transform and have different hair colors or whatnot, your facial features are always the same. My mentor taught me”

Shinobu spat her drink, luckily, not on the carpet floor, but back to the glass cup.

“I’m sorry… that’s… *what*?”

“What’s so funny, Bellsie?”

“Nothing, sorry! It’s just… *wow*. You saw me because of details like that?”

“I told you, Bellsie. My mentor taught me a lot of things as a Magical Girl.”

“Your mentor, huh? Was she a Magical Girl or the Master of your selection test?”

“She wans’t the Master. She’s the original Lapis Lazuline.”

Shinobu’s eyes widened.

“Wait, what do you mean the original?”

“I’m the second Lapis Lazuline. I took on her name when she retired.”

“Hang on… you’re telling me you’re *not* Lapis Lazuline?”

“Not originally. I was Blue Comet back then. She told me she’d spent a lifetime, hundreds of years as a Magical Girl. She was tired, and she wanted a successor. She was like, super powerful, top notch in the Land of Magic, so she convinced whoever’s up there to allow her name, Lapis Lazuline, to be exchangeable.”

She said this all so casually.

“So you’re the second?”

“Yeah. Everything she had was transferred over to me. Her suit, her name. I became Lapis Lazuline, and I wanted to live up to it.”

“And she trained you for this?”

“In the mountainside yeah. Abandoned areas mostly. We needed places where we could train in solitude. She told me how to fight, how to survive, ugh, I hated those days, so tiring.”

Shinobu remembered Lazuline’s speed at fighting. She was always able to go straight to the Great Dragon, and she could withstand so much pain and still be in one piece.

Shinobu had gotten Lazuline wrong this whole time.

Wait, but if she wasn’t the original Lapis Lazuline, and assuming the game chose them, then…

…Lazuline wasn’t even supposed to be in the game. They have the *wrong* Lapis Lazuline.

Which means Lazuline was innocent, and the only reason she was so well focused on everything was because of her training.

The guilt built up inside Shinobu.

Now she was sure she had to protect her only original teammate.

“Lazuline, how’s school? Are you doing okay there? Having fun?”

“I quit school… I didn’t have time for school,” she said casually.

Sipping her soda, she continued, “It’s not like I think school sucks or anything, it’s just that the original Lazuline was *very* demanding. I still play with my friends, it’s just… yeah. I never liked her, but I wanted to be a hero, so I had to give it a go, y’know?”

“And your father was okay with it?”

“Papa lets me do what I want, mostly.”

Her dad wouldn’t have to pay tuition if Lazuline didn’t go to school, but Shinobu wondered if her dad was a nice person or not.

“Hey, Lazuline. Do you know why I came here?”

“Hm? Uh… is it to come play and see me?”
Innocent as always.

“Well, not exactly. I came here to find out more about you.”

“Aww, that’s sweet Bellsie! I can talk about anything you want! Don’t worry! You must be tired. The game overworked you, and being a detective in real life must be tough too!”

Shinobu smiled. Her work was done.

“Yeah. I think I should head home now.”

“Eh?? Now? But you just came! Please, please, *pleaaaase* stay over? It’ll be fun!!!”

“I, uh…”

Lazuline’s eyes were filled with admiration.

Shinobu sighed, and reluctantly nodded.

☆ Shadow Gale

Mamori was in Kanoe’s room.

On the room was Kanoe’s PC.

Nearby was her bed, and that was where Mamori sat.

Kanoe, however, was sitting in the most… strangest position ever.

There was a chair, and on that chair, was a balance ball. The kind you would use on gyms.

On that ball was Kanoe, sitting happily.

The fact that Kanoe might be able to fall at any time is making Mamori nervous, and she can't focus.

Kanoe however, continued to talk proudly.

"The next area is the Demon's Castle. According to the game rules, once we defeat the Demon Lord, we win."

"Right."

"Mamori, back after we fought the Great Dragon, you felt sorry for it, didn't you?"

"…What?"

"Can't hide things from me, Mamori"

"Well, doesn't matter now. It's dead."

"Hmm, that's true. How are things going in your end? Good?"

"It's been okay."

"Ah, that's good. My team is also doing well so far. Combat-wise we seem to be in good shape. Perhaps you didn't know, Mamori, but apparently, Lapis Lazuline is truly a combat-based Magical Girl. It's amazing how well she fought, I don't think I've ever been so impressed with that girl. To think, she had a spunky personality that hides that powerful skill."

"Mmm" Mamori said.

Kanoe continued bouncing on the ball. She noticed Shadow Gale's expression.

"Mamori… I don't think this is the case, but… are you *jealous*?"

Mamori closed her eyes and smiled sheepishly.

"…No, my lady. I'm not."

Kanoe chuckled.

“I hope you do stick to our plan. To find the traitor, we can’t be together, Mamori. This is good for you too, being independent.”

“I’m not going to jeapordize the plan.”

“Then continue scouting on your own, and I’ll investigate my current team.”
Mamori stood up.

“You’re sure you can keep playing this charade, my lady?”

“If there’s one person that I wouldn’t lie to, it’s you, Mamori. Perhaps you didn’t know this, but…”

Mamori listened in,

“…I had told the other girls that your Magical Skill was to create tanks.”

Mamori’s eyes widened.

Pfle smiled.

Mamori blinked, “Why didn’t you tell me about this first?”

“You’re not the only one who would protect the other. I’ll be fine, Mamori. Find information, and we’ll make it. Now, will you help me to the door?”

“We don’t have to pretend in the real world, my lady.”

Pfle laughed,

“Well, you’re becoming at least a little more independent. Very well then,”

Kanoe jumped down the bouncing ball, grabbed her PC laptop, and her notebook, and walked out of the door.

“Be careful out there, okay, Mamori?” she said as she closed the door.

Master’s Side

Part 7

The rattling of the Rubik's Cube kept going and going.

The girl with glasses talked to no one, but she talked anyway.

"Snow White seemed a little mad earlier"

She continued to play with her Rubik's Cube.

"I wonder if we can get along someday."

She sighed, and snapped her fingers.

The door leading outside changed to a mosaic pattern and slowly began to disappear.

"Soon, the players are going to go to the Demon Lord's castle. The final conflict will begin! The final showdown! The ideal Magical Girl will be shown! I really should market this game to actual Magical Girls. One day, perhaps, hmhm."

The girl let go of her Rubik's Cube and fiddled with her Magical Phone.

There was no reply from Fal.

"Oh, my mascot. You try and try, but in the end, you'll have to follow what I say. That girl was smart in getting you to reveal information."

Indeed, Pfle was someone to look out for. She had managed to get Fal to get a loophole in the Magical Candy event.

But no one will know the true identity of the Demon Lord.

That information only belonged to the Master, and the Master alone.

The Rubik's Cube continued moving its parts without the girl touching them.

Chapter 8:
Now, There is Nothing

☆ Nokko-Chan

As usual, Nokko-Chan was transported back into the game world. What's unusual, however, is that she was transported into the Library Area.

Around her, Lapis Lazuline, Detick Bell, and Pfle in the distance.

Nokko-Chan was surprised at this sudden change.

Detick Bell and Lazuline were also quite shocked. Shocked of the books, shocked of the area, shocked of the table, shocked at each other…

…Wait.

Nokko-Chan must've accidentally spread the 'surprised' emotion around.

Stop.

Okay.

But really, she was actually quite surprised.

Since the other two girls were confused as well, this must be Pfle's doing.

Apparently, some time before, Pfle had bought an item using the 'R' option. She got a *Starting Area Location Changer*.

While this is actually quite good news, Nokko-Chan could sense the other girls' suspicions.

If the killer had this kind of item, it would be easy for her to just kill Masked Wonder without taking the time they would normally need.

Was Pfle the killer?

Nokko-Chan knows that @NyanNyan wouldn't have any intention to kill, nor would Genopsycho.

The pool of Magical Girls is getting smaller, and the suspects are thinning.

Let’s review.

Pfle had separated with Shadow Gale for some reason. We have Detick Bell and Lazuline, who invited Nokko-Chan to their group.

Then we have Team Clantail, still in one piece. Finally, we have Melville, who has disappeared off somewhere, and then Shadow Gale, who’s also doing her own thing now.

10 girls left.

According to Pfle’s book, the Magical Coin item still exists, so the killer, or an accomplice, would still be out there.

But now, everyone is focused on unlocking the next area, the Demon’s Castle.

There are really only two teams now, Team Clantail and Team Bell.

Nokko-Chan is not a combat Magical Girl. She doesn’t believe Detick Bell and Pfle are good with fighting either, which only leaves Lazuline as their combatant.

Fortunately, Team Clantail volunteered to handle any monsters that show up.

Leonetta and Miyokata often argue, but they work well together when fighting, and Clantail isn’t so bad herself.

Pechika is a bit on the timid side but they’ve made it work. In a way, it was kind of like Team Daisy, with most of the 3 girls being fighters.

This means that Team Bell is completely focused on figuring out how to clear the Library Area.

Unlike how the previous area tested the girls’ combat skills, the Library Area tests the girls’ intelligence instead.

The Area Clear mission is slightly different.

The key is the books, unfortunately the books themselves are arranged haphazardly, which Detick Bell and Pfle believed to be the key.

Some titles are out of place, some of the binders are also out of place.

Nokko-Chan and Lazuline were told to gather books that had specific characteristics, but even that was hard.

There were books whose pages were all blank, then there are books whose pages were all red… with paint.

At the end of the hallways, there was an empty bookshelf. Pfle and Shadow Gale believed that this was key.

The two girls discussed while Nokko-Chan and Lazuline continued to find more books.

Whenever a demon appeared, Lazuline took quick work of them.

“Don’t thank me, thank my teacher!”

Nokko-Chan silently did.

Hopefully, this whole thing will end soon.

☆ Detick Bell

Detick Bell had remembered that she was in Lazuline's room, drinking some alcohol that she bought, before suddenly being transported to the Library Area.

Apparently, Pfle's new item is a *Starting Location Changer*.

That's very useful.

According to Pfle, she got this item from the 'R' option in the store.

So the 'R' option *was* useful after all. If Bell had spare candy, she might even try it. Though, the game is nearly over once they clear the next area.

Now, they have to solve this mystery.

Lazuline and Nokko-Chan had found some hints to help them.

'To clear the Library, square the circle'.

That was the hint they received.

Bell wasn't exactly sure what to do with that hint. She had consulted with Pfle to find the best way to solve the mystery.

Pfle had told Bell that a special quality of the Library Area was that they wouldn't be attacked if they were sitting in chairs, so for the most part, both Pfle and Detick Bell spent their time sitting and discussing.

They tried to arrange books based on title, color, bindings, they burned some books, they watered some books.

Nothing seemed to respond.

The empty bookshelf was also apparently a key property of the mystery, but Bell had no idea what to do with it.

Pfle was also thinking very hard.

In a way, Bell envied Pfle's intelligence. Just like herself, she was a smart and intelligent girl, and Detick Bell admired these kinds of people in real life.

So now she just had to make sure she can solve this mystery.

Square the circle?

Square the circle…

Square the circle. What?

"Bellsie, Bellsie!"

Bell's thinking was interrupted by happy yelling.

It was Lazuline.

"What is it"

"I wanna become a detective!"

"Wait, say again?"

"I've been thinking, and I think being a detective would be a great thing!"

"Who?"

"Me!!!"

"Why the sudden outburst?"

"Well… Bellsie, you're just so cool and clever and I wanna be just like you! I think I can become your apprentice detective! Detective Lapis Lazuline is at your service!"

Detick Bell sighed, smiled, and nodded.

"Alright then, as your first job, you should continue looking for more books we might need."

"Roger! Oh, but before that, I found another hint!"

Lazuline passed the hint over to Detick Bell.

‘Begin With Me’.

The hint was in the form of a book.

‘Begin With Me’.

That was the literal title as well.

Pfle rubbed her chin.

“Could I have a look at that?” asked Pfle.

She went to her Magic Carpet and placed it on the beginning of the bookshelf.

“*Begin With Me* huh? Good job, Lazuline.”

Pfle smiled as she looked for other books. It looked like she had all the things figured out.

Pfle began putting books upon books lined up in the shelves, but Detick Bell couldn’t see any pattern.

…Wait.

Begin With Me had 3 words in the title.

The next book had 1 word in the title.

The next had 4.

The book titles didn’t matter, just the number of words. Because if you count the number of words in the title in order, Pfle’s arranging them like…

…3.14159265358979323846264338327950288419716939937510582097494459 2

Click

The gate opened.

They had arranged the books according to Pi.

They squared the circle… Pi…

Next, the Demon's Castle.

☆ Shadow Gale

If there's one thing Shadow Gale was glad about in this game, it's that smells and dirt won't transfer back into real life.

Shadow Gale isn't picky, but she's not exactly a fan of the moldy damp smell of the Underground Area.

She had purchased several tools from the shop, and modified it to her own whim.

She heard the roar of a Great Dragon. While her heart jumped at first, she was calm, since she was prepared.

When the Great Dragon came, she used her self-made knife launcher to launch the *Dragon Killing Knife*, killing the Great Dragon instantly.

She also got the Dragon Shield that the boss of the area dropped, just in case.

While the rest of the girls were in the Library Area, Shadow Gale was collecting information and trying to find out who the killer is back in the Underground Area.

In the more forbidden and restricted parts of the map, there were a lot of traps to watch out for as well.

Disarming them would be simple, but also time consuming.

She had to remember her goal.

There was a killer in their midst, and Shadow Gale will find her.

☆ Pechika

The next area is the Demon's Castle.

Contrary to what Pechika had thought, the castle itself was marble, and the inside was polished clean. So much so that the floor reflected the Magical Girls.

One by one, Pechika saw all the Magical Girls gather at the entrance.

Of course, the 3 teammates of hers are here.

Pfle was riding her magic carpet.

Detick Bell, Lazuline, and Nokko-Chan were here as well.

Appearing out of thin air was Melville, long-absent for a while.

And finally, Shadow Gale, in the corner.

The main entrance had a beautiful painting of a woman with wings growing out from the back.

There were also statues of beautiful and grotesque demonic creatures. Fitting for the Demon Lord's castle.

Written on a large door on the top,

To Proceed Forward, Thou Must Work as One

They have to team up, even though one of them is a killer.

The door opened, and a long narrow hallway appeared.

Carefully, they walked one by one.

Miyokata walked in front of Pechika.

"Don't worry, Pechika! I will protect you!" she said with a smile.

"Mm, yeah… Thanks, Miyokata"

Miyokata nodded. Then, her eyes widened.

"Wait, *Stop Stop*!!!"

Everyone stopped, the voice came from Lazuline.

“What’s up?” asked Leonetta.

Lazuline looked around, “What do you mean *what’s up*? There’s a trap on that floor *right there*!”

The other Magical Girls were confused. To them, there was nothing on the floor.

“What?”

“What did you see?”

“I don’t see anything”

Lazuline was insistent,

“You guys! It just *looks* like a normal floor, that’s clearly booby trapped though!”

“…Well I don’t see it.”

“Aarrgh…”

Clap!

Pfle clapped her hands to get everyone’s attention.

“It appears Lazuline may have sensed some kind of pressure plate floor. I don’t doubt Lazuline’s abilities. I only need to test it so that we can pass through without harm.”

Leonetta raised her hand.

“I’ve got a suggestion”

Before they knew it, the statue that they saw in the great hall started moving. Its weight and size made it move slowly, but it continued to move.

The other Magical Girls were prepared to fight, but Leonetta just smiled as the marble statue continued to walk past the Magical Girls.

It walked on to the trap, and then.

Boom!

A large gigantic explosion on the marble floor.

“Trap’s gone!” said Lazuline.

“So it’s one-time,” murmured Pfle.

A shrill shriek of joy came from Leonetta.

“My powers are actually *useful* now!!!”

Pechika understood that feeling quite well. A useless power finally becoming useful. That was something that Pechika experienced a while back.

For most of the game, Leonetta had been contributing by fighting, but she never got to use her Magical Skill.

And so the Magical Girls continued to traverse the castle.

Considering Lazuline’s perception and incredible eyesight, even compared to other Magical Girls, she led the way.

She’d meticulously spot every trap laid out. When several monsters showed up, she even used those traps against them, by standing nearby and teleporting as soon as monsters show up.

They continued, passing through the next room, and on, and on, and on.

They went straight, went right, went straight, went right.

“Are we going through the same rooms?” asked Leonetta.

Pfle checked her map.

“No, we’re in some kind of spiral-like maze, but in a square. Similar to a labyrinth. The final point should be nearby.”

And when they reached the final part, they found a large room, devoid of anything. A dead end?

But Pfle went in, and she used her Magical Phone.

“The shop. We’ve reached it,” said Pfle

“Oh thank god, I’m starving!” grumbled Leonetta.

Pfle purchased a large pot, intricate in design, with some demonic motifs on it.

“Pechika, would you mind cooking for us? I heard your food is amazing,” said Pfle with a smile.

Pechika smiled sheepishly. There were more than twice as many people now from her usual 3 customers.

How will she cook for them all?

Then Pechika had an idea, the rubble from the explosive traps. She grabbed all the marble that she could, and in an instant, transformed them all into vegetable soup.

Lunch is served!

Some of the girls were shocked when they tasted it. Some ate slowly, others munched in with excitement.

“A-Are you serious!? You’ve been monopolizing all this *food* this whole time, Pecchy?? Aaaah!!!” Lazuline cried out as she gobbled up the vegetable soup.

“L-Lazuline, be polite,” said Detick Bell.

“B-But… This soup… I don’t wanna eat anything else other than this… The taste is so…. Holy *Shit*!!!”

“Lazuline!” Detick Bell shouted, slightly embarrassed.

Lazuline gobbled and gobbled endlessly.

Detick Bell ate while trying to calm her down.

Pfle sipped her soup elegantly, happily sipping it.

Shadow Gale kept an eye out for Pfle, but didn’t stop eating as well. Looks like she enjoyed it.

Melville ate with a smile, oftentimes muttering something Pechika couldn’t exactly understand.

Nokko-Chan helped serve the food, like an actual maid. She was actually pretty good at it, almost as if this is natural for her.

As usual, Miyokata and Leonetta ate happily and are proud of Pechika.

Clantail’s tail wagged as usual, but it shook more widely and rapidly than ever before.

Pechika felt really happy.

It’s times like these where she can really feel appreciated.

She wasn’t good at fighting, she could kind of search, and she can’t solve any clues or mysteries, but cooking? This was where she shone.

She wished it could be like this forever.

But all good things must come to an end.

The group prepared once more to march into the Demon's Castle, now with a full stomach and full energy.

☆ Shadow Gale

The party took note of their inventory.

The shop in this area was expensive, fitting for a final area.

There was only one stock of a Weapon +10 and a Shield +10.

It's clear the Game Master must want them to work together to defeat the Demon Lord. So, with everyone agreeing, they pooled together their Magical Candy and purchased the two items.

They gave the Weapon +10 to Melville, since she knew how to use her weapon best.

The Shield +10 they gave to Clantail.

"Mamori, you still have your Dragon Shield, correct?"

"Yes, I do."

"Good. That shield is stronger than the average shield."

The strength of this Great Dragon shield was comparable to that of a Shield +12, so Shadow Gale kept it.

Shadow Gale also made some smaller purchases in the store.

A *Stun Gun*. An Electric-type weapon that can inflict Electricity damage on a monster. When used on another player, guarantees instant knock-out.

Finally, a large *Flamethrower*. However, sneakily, Shadow Gale had improved it by shrinking it while maintaining its power.

She tested it by firing it upwards. A large jet of flame blasted from the device. Some of the girls shrieked in surprise.

“Oho, if we defeat the Demon Lord with that, that would be very *funny*,” claimed Miyokata.

“Speaking of which, do we know what affinities or types the monsters in this area have?” asked Clantail.

Pfle consulted her Monster Picture Book, but found that information on the monsters in the castle were all ‘???’.

“Guess we’ll find out,” muttered Leonetta.

The Magical Girls got back into a line, with the shield in the front, and Melville ready to shoot anything.

It was as if they were a bomb disposal team.

Shadow Gale was at the very back, with the Dragon Shield, to protect the rear from anything.

Miyokata was behind Pechika, and occasionally nudged her to move, muttering that ‘it’ll be fine, Pechika!’.

Everytime she did, Pechika made a little yelp.

They kept moving on, with Lazuline in the lead. She’d disable and/or activate the traps.

Since the maps go in a spiral direction, the amount of distance they cover lessens every time. Until finally…

…They stepped into a large room.

In the room was a large door. According to Lazuline, it wasn’t trapped, so she pushed through it.

And on the other side were lined up knights in shining armor.

Slowly, they began moving.

“Oh. Well, crap.”

The Magical Girls raised their weapons and shields.

☆ Nokko-Chan

From Nokko-Chan's position, she could only see what seemed to be knights and some kind of robot.

It was hard to sense its expression, since their faces were either covered in helmets or visors.

The robot flew to the sky, and from it shot out a small object with white smoke.

A missile!?

Shadow Gale raised her shield, and the blast shook the room. That's when all the Magical Girls rushed in.

The white smoke obscured much of the room, but Nokko-Chan could see Pfle on her magic carpet trying to find info on the enemy.

"Hell Knights! Their weakness is-" Pfle cut herself off with a gasp, a missile was headed straight for her.

Nokko-Chan slid across the room, equipped her shield, and held it out in front of Pfle.

The blast vibrated so hard that Nokko-Chan felt pain in her arms, but they were both safe.

Pfle nodded and flew away from the fight to safety.

The smoke cleared and Nokko-Chan could see and analyze the battle clearly.

Melville was darting about on the walls, shooting harpoons with her bow towards the flying robots.

Clantail was fighting off two knights with her lower body being an octopus.

Leonetta and Miyokata were working together to take down a robot, while Pechika would shield them from attacks.

Detick Bell used her cane to fight, while Lazuline was handling over 3 knights with ease, teleporting every time.

Shadow Gale used her giant scissors to cut one Demon Knight in half.

These enemies were nearly as strong as the Magical Girls.

Then, Nokko-Chan saw the one knight that stared directly at her.

It ran in an attempt to hit her.

She bolted in the other direction, holding up her shield in the back. The knight swung its sword and swatted the shield away.

Instinctively, Nokko-Chan materialized her Mop +7, and blocked the next swing of the sword.

The huge sword's clash caused her to be launched across into a wall, her shoulders hitting it. Pain filling up.

The knight continued on towards her.

She wanted to scream, she couldn't fight off this thing.

Help.

Someone?

Anyone?

Fight off this thing!

Then she heard a scream. The scream was full of anger and rage, and echoed across the whole room, so much so that Nokko-Chan wanted to cover her ears.

A large round shield whacked the knight away, and a Magical Girl picked it back up and pounded on the large knight.

Nokko-Chan saw the girl.

It was Pechika.

Pechika was full of anger and vengeance, beating down on the Hell Knight.

Nokko-Chan boosted those emotions, and for the first time, Pechika moved with the speed and strength of a true Magical Girl.

Nokko-Chan spread the feelings of rage and anger around the room.

Fight.

Fight.

Fight!

Miyokata's pet dragon appeared and mauled the Hell Knight, while Melville continued to shoot down the robots.

Clantail's octopus legs grabbed each spear of the knights, and slammed the knights down to the marble floor.

Leonetta appeared to be controlling the dead knights to fight each other.

Soon, it was all over.

Dead scraps of plastic and metal littered the floor.

The girls took a short break before continuing again.

A door at the end of the hallway.

Lazuline looked it over.

"Not trapped at all!" she said.

"This is the final part," said Pfle.

Everyone looked at each other and nodded. They prepared their assault, and Lazuline kicked the door open.

On that room was a large throne. A chair made of marble. It was a large, circular, and *empty* room.

Slowly, the girls took a step forward, anticipating any attacks from the Demon Lord.

But there was nothing.

“Huh? Where’s the Demon Lord?” asked Lazuline.

They began searching the entire room, high and low, in every nook and cranny.

“There’s some ancient writing carved behind this throne,” said Detick Bell.

Pfle approached it and used her *Translator-Kun* to scan it.

‘The Demon Lord is not here at the moment. The Demon Lord has been chased by 15 Magical Girls the whole game. Good job! Thank you so much for coming! Due to the fact that the Demon Lord’s base has been broken into, Monsters will now all level up!’

Confused looks were shared among all the Magical Girls.

Then, their Magical Phones rang.

A new text.

‘Congratulations! You’ve reached the final area! Unfortunaetly, looks like there’s no Demon Lord to be found. Keep trying! In the meantime, reaching this area is not a waste of time. You have all fulfilled the requirements for the *Memory Restoration Program*. Congratulations!’.

Clantail looked at Pfle with confusion.

“…Where’s the Demon Lord?”

Pfle simply frowned.

☆ Pechika

Pfle had called for help from Fal.

Unfortunately, it seems that even Fal was dumbfounded.

“What do you mean there’s no Demon Lord, Pon?”

“There’s nothing here, Fal.”

“That’s impossible. I’m telling you the truth that the Demon Lord being killed is the conditions to clear the game, Pon!”

Fal rotated around and paced in the air.

“Maybe… The Demon Lord’s hiding?”

“Hiding?”

“In a previous area, maybe? The Monsters have leveled up, so there’s no point to that function if you’re all just going to stay here, Pon!”

“I guess that would make sense.”

“I’m sorry it turned out like this, Pon. I wish you all the best!”

“Thank you, Fal.”

Pfle turned off her Magical Phone.

Pechika, Miyokata, and Leonetta sat in a chair in the Library Area.

Many of the girls had decided to split up to cover the areas, and these three got the Library Area.

The Demon Lord was hiding somewhere, so they looked and looked.

They searched for secret entrances or anything of that sort, but found nothing.

There was no sign of anything at all.

So now they were all sitting in a chair near a desk.

Miyokata and her pet dragon were idly playing around on the desk.

Leonetta tapped her fingers on the desk.

“Dammit, I can’t handle this anymore, we were supposed to be free *now*!”

Leonetta slammed the desk. The vibration sent several books off the shelf.

“Hey, don’t be so loud. Fal said that the Demon Lord exists”

“You trust that thing?”

“How else are we to clear the game?”

Miyokata and Leonetta were at it again.

“I’m not just gonna wait around until someone finds it.”

“Yes, but being angry will not solve anything!”

Their voices got louder and louder.

“What do *you* know? You haven’t done any fighting at all! You were just scouting and scouting the whole damn game!”

“At least I have done something to progress us!”

Miyokata’s dragon pet growled.

It jumped on Leonetta’s right arm and chomped on it.

Leonetta screamed out in pain.

She tried to shake off the little dragon, but it won’t let go.

Miyokata screamed as well, trying to tell the dragon to stop biting, but the dragon still won’t let go.

Pechika wanted to close her ears, this was a stressful situation.

Then, Leonetta extended claws from her other hand, and she stabbed the dragon in the throat.

Immediately, the small dragon released its grip and fell to the ground, with a pool of blood on it.

Miyokata screamed and cried out, trying to heal the dragon, but potions wouldn’t work on monsters.

Leonetta, hands dripping in blood, looked at her surroundings.

Her eyes became hollow. She slowly glanced at Pechika.

“…Pechika.”

Pechika saw what happened and gasped.

She looked at Leonetta while biting her lip.

"…I think… It's for the best that I leave. You've both been good people. I've… I think it's best if I just… go… So, goodbye."

She turned around and began walking away.

"Hey! Leonetta! You can't just walk away like that! Hey! *Come back*!" screamed Miyokata.

"Leonetta!" Pechika shouted, still sitting on the chair.

Miyokata reached out over to Leonetta.

Then Pechika saw a black fog.

"Miyokata, look out!"

Snake-like black demons appeared and began wrapping itself around Miyokata's body.

Leonetta turned around and gasped, but another demon pushed Leonetta away.

Leonetta managed to regain her balance enough to sit on a chair. Safety.

But the chair slowly morphed into the form of another demon.

It's never done that before.

The demon whacked Leonetta down to the floor.

Her body now prone, the demon pushed her body over as it smashed into a bookshelf. Supported on a solid object, the demon began kicking Leonetta's head.

One kick.

Two kicks.

Three kicks.

The sound of cracking wood.

Pechika tried to interfere but another demon tripped her legs.

That's when she saw it.

The snake demons entered Miyokata's body.

Miyokata began choking, blood pouring out of her nose and mouth. Then, black fog seeped out of her.

Miyokata's body lost power, and she fell face forward.

The other demons then dematerialized.

Pechika walked over to Miyokata, tried to use the healing potion, but it wouldn't work.

It wouldn't work…

…That means…

…Miyokata was gone.

She heard footsteps.

Leonetta walked over to her, staggering from the beating she received.

"Leoneta! You're okay!" Pechika said.

Leonetta saw Miyokata's body.

She fell on her knees.

Her eyes were hollow, she murmured out in a small voice.

"…What have I done…"

Master's Side
Part 8

"There's no Demon Lord, Pon"

"Come again?"

“There is no Demon Lord, Pon”

The girl with glasses laughed as Fal spoke that.

“False. I made the game clear message obvious. There *is* a Demon Lord.”

“But the throne room was empty.”

“Just because I called the area the Demon’s Castle, doesn’t mean the Demon Lord will just *wait* for them there, my little Fal.”

“So where?”

“That’s a secret”

“…You’re hiding something, Pon.”

“Fal, if there’s one thing I’m not, it’s a liar. Everything I’ve given in the game is the truth. They must defeat the Demon Lord to win, and that hasn’t changed. Just because they haven’t found the Demon Lord doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist, hmhm…”

The girl with the glasses spun her chair around happily.

“By the way, I wonder how Snow White’s doing, hmm?”

Snow White’s Side

The killings are happening again.

But she can’t just stop it. This Master has prepared. Her powers are also extraordinary. Snow White didn’t sense anything when she tried to read her mind.

Well, this time, she’ll just have to improvise.

First, she’ll need information.

She went to the Land of Magic's *Magical Girl Department*. Snow White's not normally used to going there, since she prefers field work.

That department has a section that deals with rogue Magical Girls.

A file on almost all Magical Girls.

Time to find it.

She approached the head of the department, wearing white robes, sitting in a chair. Stereotypical magical attire.

"Snow White?"

"I need info"

"I thought you were to handle the situation"

"I *am* handling it. I need info."

"You'd have to go through procedure, we can't just *give* everything"

"There's not enough time, six have died, more will die soon."

"I'm sorry, Snow White, but we sent you in because we thought you could handle this."

"I haven't given up yet. I just need to know information about the Master. If you won't help me, lead me in the right direction."

"You could search our archives, but for master access you'd have to have a higher clearance."

"What, is there a password?"

"Yes"

"Are you cleared to use it?"

"Well, yes. I am a Head after all."

"Could you tell me your username and password?"

“…Is this supposed to be a joke, Snow White?”

Nope.

Snow White’s got the Head’s mind on the password. Now to read it. If there’s one thing people are conditioned to do, it’s that if you ask them about a topic, they will unconsciously think about the topic.

Snow White can read her mind.

She got the password and username.

Snow White smiled,

“Well, it was worth a shot. Thanks for your help!”

Snow White headed out as fast as she could, she was running out of time to save those girls.

Chapter 9:
We Are All Her Children

☆ Detick Bell

The other Magical Girls were looking for the Demon Lord. Bell was also searching for the Demon Lord herself.

Everyone split up into multiple areas, and Bell had gotten the Demon’s Castle.

Thanks to some hints from Fal, she knew that the Demon’s Castle Area only had Event Monsters.

This means the enemies won’t respawn.

She should be able to conduct her investigation without having to fight anyone in here.

First, the throne room.

Last time, she had confirmed that there was nothing here, but this time, she was alone and had time.

Using her magnifying glass, she tried to search for any possible clues. Fingerprints? Footprints? Anything?

Why is there a throne but no one to sit on it?

Maybe this room was just for decoration?

Tapping on the walls, checking for hollow spots, maybe there's a secret entrance that she didn't know about somewhere?

It's tempting to try and find it, but after all her attempts, there simply was nothing new to be gained from this location.

Oh well, there's really no point.

Negative information is still information. At least she can confidently say that there are no leads in the actual throne room.

Now to check every other room in this castle.

A clean sweep through everything. Boring, but necessary. Besides, this is what detectives are supposed to do.

Finally, she reached the terrace area. This was where the Shop was. Again, Bell investigated every nook and cranny she could find here.

Nothing.

No hollow walls, no secret entrances. Nothing.

It's been a good few minutes. If any Magical Girls saw something, they should've reported it by now.

Hmm…

…There was something she *hasn't* checked.

She opened the Shop from her Magical Phone.

Browsing over to the items section, she noticed something new.

Memory Restoration Program.

It's cheap.

It's cheaper than anything she had seen in any shop in the game.

"What… is this?"

Bell understood the meaning of the device, but she didn't understand the purpose. What happens if she got this?

She immediately purchased the app.

Bell activated it.

The screen on her Magical Phone read,

'*Would you like your memories to be restored?*'

Crack!

A sharp pain and a loud noise came from behind Detick Bell.

Her face was cold. Her hands were cold. Her body was cold.

Why?

Why is it so cold?

Oh…

…She was on the marble floor. Her hands and legs sprawled about, Magical Phone still in her right hand.

She wanted to stand, but her body won't obey.

The back of her head was numb.

She heard footsteps.

There are no monsters here.

So it must be…

…A Magical Girl.

Detick Bell understood what was going on.

It's the killer. She was targeted.

Why was she targeted?

Why was she attacked?

The… Oh…

Memory Restoration…

Detick Bell was afraid. She didn't want to die. But, the killer will probably take the Memory Restoration Program away, just like Masked Wonder's Miracle Coin.

That means Bell had to protect her Magical Phone.

Her Magical Skill was useless in the game world, but it still worked.

Now, she could probably make use of it.

She had to pass her Magical Phone over.

Someone she trusted with her life.

She had to give this to her.

Lazuline.

Detick Bell kissed the floor. A face slowly began to appear.

"T-The blue…" every word hurts her brain. Her head felt painful.

She passed the Phone over to the face's mouth on the floor.

"Give this… to the blue… Magical Girl…"

Detick Bell hoped it would be enough. She knew the killer would finish her off.

I'm sorry, Lazuline.

☆ Nokko-Chan

Nokko-Chan's Magical Phone rang.

It looks like it was time.

'*Everyone please gather round to the square, Pon'*

She was used to this. Everyone was used to this.

They all appeared at the square. All 10 Magical Gi-

Wait…

…Not 10, 8.

Two girls were missing.

Clantail, who was searching in the Grasslands Area with Nokko-Chan, had looked around for Miyokata.

"…Pechika, where's Miyokata?"

Pechika had tears on her eyes. Leonetta's face was hung downwards.

Pechika explained everything. The demons, the fight, the argument before, Miyokata was gone.

But there was another girl who's missing.

"Hey… Where's Bellsie?" asked Lazuline, slightly confused.

"Bellsie? Bellsie? Anyone seen her?"

Fal materialized in the middle of the Wasteland Town.

“Thank you all for coming, Pon!”

“Fal! Have you seen Bellsie?”

“Teleportation is automatic, Pon. She should be here, Pon!”

“Yeah, but… she’s not”

Fal’s face froze.

“If she’s not here, Pon… then, there’s a high chance that… she may have died… Pon.”

Lazuline stood there.

“Wha… No, no no, Bellsie’s safe, there’s no monsters in the Demon Castle, right?”

“There isn’t, Pon”

“So how can she just *die*? Bellsie won’t commit suicide! She’d be here with us!”

Everyone else had assumed the worst.

Lazuline denied it all.

“No, that’s impossible. There’s no one there to kill her, so she can’t be dead. Fal? Fal!”

Fal, with slow movements, ignored Lazuline and moved on.

“Today’s event isn’t random, Pon. A fixed event for clearing the Demon’s Castle”

“Hey, Fal! Are you listening to me!? C’mon, Fal! Tell me where Bellsie is!”

“…This is a hint coming straight from the Master herself, Pon. Please look at your Magical Phones.”

Nokko-Chan opened her phone.

‘*Congratulations Magical Girls. You’re one step closer to being the ideal Magical Girl. Here’s a great big hint for you. The Demon Lord isn’t just any enemy. No, the Demon Lord… is one of YOU! That’s right, all this time, one of you has been a traitor, whose*

goal is to eliminate all of you. That's their victory condition. Try your best to root out the traitor! Good luck!'

Everyone's face was blank.

Everyone looked at each other.

They knew there was a killer in their midst, but they had no idea that the killer could be the Demon Lord.

Worse… They'll have to kill her if they want to win.

Lazuline's face reddened with anger.

"Fal… Fal, what the hell is this?"

"Lazuline, wait!" Nokko-Chan tried calling out to her

"Fal, where's Bellsie. Tell me what happened to Bellsie. Fal!"

Fal sighed a deep breath. He looked sad, and he disappeared.

"He's not allowed to say anything, Lazuline," said Pfle.

"But, Bellsie… She's not… She can't be…" Lazuline's face was on the verge of tears.

"We have to go back! Back to the castle. Bellsie was there!" she exclaimed.

"Alright. But, Lazuline… are you prepared for the worst?" asked Pfle.

Lazuline stood there, and she just began walking.

☆ Shadow Gale

The Demon's Castle.

Everyone stuck together. With the Demon Lord's identity unknown, and a confirmed killer in the midst, they all kept a lookout for each other.

When they entered the Demon's Castle Area, Shadow Gale had expected the worst to happen.

They had reached the terrace, and the smell struck her nose.

It was the same smell that she had when she found Masked Wonder's body.

Then she noticed the red puddle in the middle of the room.

And she noticed a body, lying face down on the floor.

A cape, stockings, and a coat, with a cap as well.

Detick Bell.

Lazuline walked over to the body, her shoes stepping on the blood puddle. She looked at it for a good 10 seconds.

Then she fell on her knees.

"…Hey… This is a joke, right?" she said, as her hand gripped Detick Bell's hand.

Tears dripped from her face, mixing with the pool of blood.

Shadow Gale and Pfle merely looked over at Lazuline.

Clantail turned away from the body. Leonetta as well.

Pechika began crying.

Nokko-Chan hung her head.

Melville shook her head.

One of these people killed her.

"Are you the blue Magical Girl?"

All voices stopped. The girls tensed up. The voice wasn't female. It was the voice of a man.

But who?

“If you are, I was told to give this to you.”

Lazuline looked down to see a face, on the floor, staring at her.

From its mouth, he spat out a Magical Phone.

Lazuline was dumbfounded, the other Magical Girls were also confused.

Pfle nodded,

“This was Detick Bell’s Magical Skill. To talk to buildings, right? She must’ve known the killer would take whatever’s on her phone, and she hid it. She hid it to give it to you, Lazuline.”

Lapis Lazuline’s red tear-stained face looked up to Pfle. Then at Bell’s Magical Phone.

She picked it up slowly.

“Bellsie…”

She turned it on, and went to the items screen.

“What. What’s this?”

She showed the screen to the rest of the Magical Girls.

Memory Restoration Program.

Pfle’s eyebrows were raised.

“Lazuline, may I examine the phone?” Pfle asked, with her hands outstretched, on her magic carpet.

Lazuline hesitated for a moment. Then, she reluctantly handed the phone over.

Pfle activated the app.

It asked a simple question.

‘*Would you like your memories to be restored?*’

“What is this?” muttered Pfle to herself.

She pressed the button labeled ‘*Yes*’. The button labeled ‘*No*’ disappeared.

‘*Congratulations, Magical Girls. Your memories will be restored*’.

Shadow Gale felt an intense nausea-inducing pain in her head. Her head began feeling dizzy, as many things seemed to be entering her mind.

Not to mention the time was up… Log-Out had occurred.

Shadow Gale was back in her room, in real life, but the dizziness was still progressing.

She felt like she was about to puke.

Then, she remembered everything.

She fell down to the floor unconscious.

☆ Pechika

Pechika remembered.

Everything came back to her.

It’s been a few hours since the log-out period. Pechika was sitting at the park with Ninomiya-Kun.

He was eating her food, and she was eating as well. They were having fun.

However, Pechika had some other things on her mind.

For once, everything made sense.

When she was fighting the enemies in the Demon’s Castle, a flame seemed to have flickered inside Pechika. A flame that was shut out.

The willingness to protect her teammates, to fight. She felt angry at that moment.

She fought relentlessly, without giving up.

She was fierce, she was furious, she was ferocious.

And… at that moment in time, she felt… elated.

Excited, happy, adrenaline and fighting made her excited at that time. After that, she blamed the feeling on the fact that she was protecting her friends.

In the Library, she was back to the Pechika that was afraid of fighting.

But now, she understood why she hates fighting. Why she didn't want to fight.

It's not because she couldn't fight.

The reason why she was afraid to fight, wasn't because she was afraid of the actual fighting.

It's because she didn't want to turn into *her*.

"Mmm, I really wanna know how you made this y'know?" asked Ninomiya-Kun.

Pechika turned around, and giggled.

"Trade secret," she said while winking.

Even her crush on Ninomiya-Kun made sense.

For the longest time, Pechika had just thought that her feelings for Ninomiya-Kun came out of nowhere. No basis. Just a crush.

She was happy around him, because he reminded her of someone.

"Don't cry, Pechika. Okay? Don't cry! You're okay!"

*"But you're **not** okay! Please don't leave me like this"*

"It's going to be alright… We were stupid… but you have to save yourself, okay, Pechika?"

"I can't just-"

“Pechika… you need to run now!”

Voices came back to her head.

Ninomiya-Kun reminded her of someone close to her.

A few years ago, when Pechika had just started out being a Magical Girl, she had met someone.

Another Magical Girl.

She couldn’t recall her name.

However, she would always be with Pechika. Pechika would always make food for the both of them.

The one thing this girl liked was baseball.

Pechika would always watch her games, and then they’d have adventures as Magical Girls. Because this girl, she was a bit rebellious.

Truth be told, Pechika was a bit rebellious too back then.

One day, they made a visit to N-City’s abandoned ski resort.

N-City was a large city, at the center of Japan’s rapidly growing city infrastructure.

N-City was a mixture of classic architecture, and modern futurism.

The two Magical Girls were visiting not the city itself, but a mountainous area located just off the city’s outskirts.

This used to be a ski lodge, a place where tourists would go to enjoy the nice Winter Holidays.

Now it’s long-since abandoned.

But they knew that someone lived here. They knew that there was supposedly a Magical Girl who lived here.

Pechika blamed her recklessness. She and her friend were looking for adventure.

Who cared about the boring life of school? Pechika was going to have the adventure of her life!

Plus, they were strong, powerful Magical Girls. They felt invincible.

When they reached the cottage however, everything turned silent.

The animals were clearly there, but there was no noise. The wind made no sound. There was absolutely no sound whatsoever.

It's as if someone turned off the sound of the world.

Then, from the rooftop of the cottage, they saw a woman playing the flute. The flute was beautiful sounding, harmonious, loud.

Based on her outfit and her looks, she was a Magical Girl.

She looked beautiful. She had blonde hair, a green coat, white shirt inside.

Her body was covered all over with vines.

Dark red roses bloomed from her hair, back, and coat. Gigantic, powerful, dark red roses.

Her pupils were blood red.

She looked calm. Everything about her was like looking at something chaotic but beautiful.

And her ears.

Elf ears.

She noticed them, and jumped down from the cottage.

"Good evening, you two. It's nice to have guests"

Pechika and her friend only stared back, unsure of how to respond. The Magical Girl in front of them continued,

“Allow me to introduce myself. My name is The Forest Musician, Clamberry. I’m looking for powerful Magical Girls. Tell me, do you consider yourselves that?” she asked in a calm but sinister tone.

When the Samurai girl interrogated Pechika, she said she was looking for a musician.

This was her.

The Forest Musician Clamberry.

Clamberry.

Pechika was afraid of fighting, because she loved to fight. She loved the sensation.

So did Clamberry.

If Pechika continued to fight, she’ll become like Clamberry.

That’s something that should not happen.

“Oh, I’m full. Thanks for the meal!”

Ninomiya-Kun said with a smile.

Pechika smiled, stood up, and gave Ninomiya-Kun a light kiss on the cheek.

Ninomiya-Kun was surprised.

Pechika giggled,

“Glad you enjoyed the meal! It’s getting late, I’ll see you around, ‘kay?”

She turned her back from Ninomiya-Kun and left.

☆ Shadow Gale

Mamori was lying in Kanoe’s bed.

She had awoken from a horrible headache.

On the bed, sitting down, looking down upon her, was Kanoe.

“You’re up, Mamori.”

“…I remember.”

“I remember, too.”

“I wish I could forget it all again.”

“Me too, Mamori.”

The Forest Musician, Clamberry.

That was the name of the Master that supervised their trials. Trials that Shadow Gale and Pfle managed to survive.

Those trials involved killing, and two of them made it out.

However…

“…We did horrible things,” said Kanoe

“There’s no changing the past anymore, my lady.” sighed Mamori.

Kanoe stood up.

“That’s why we couldn’t remember. Our memories were sealed off. We couldn’t remember her name.”

Mamori rolled over, laying on her side, her face facing a wall. She didn’t want to look at Kanoe.

Kanoe continued,

“Clamberry had a trait. She only came after the strongest Magical Girls. Something that our killer has been doing for a long time. Even though we don’t know how she killed, we know that she’s following the same principles as Clamberry.”
Mamori, without looking at Kanoe, replied,

“What are you going to do?”

“We stick to the plan. We find out who among us is the killer, and we’ll have to use everything we’ve got to do it.”

Kanoe was trying to protect Mamori. That’s why she separated herself from her in the group.

Kanoe walked over to the door, and closed it.

Kanoe hasn’t changed from before.

Mamori sighed.

A long time ago, Shadow Gale and Pfle were part of a selection test. Trials that would determine who will become a Magical Girl.

This test was different than most of the others.

Losers that get eliminated are killed.

There was only supposed to be one survivor.

The organizer of this test was called Clamberry.

The Forest Musician, Clamberry.

The participants… 100 Magical Girls.

All fighting to the death.

The only reason Mamoru survived was Pfle.

Pfle had manipulated the other Magical Girls.

She had made them allies, she had made them question themselves, she had made them fight each other, she had made them protect them.

This wasn't a skill that Pfle had as a Magical Girl. This was a skill that Pfle had as a human girl, raised to become something that society wanted to see.

Pfle is a master of deception and manipulation.

She knows exactly what to say and what to appear like, she can play people like a puppetmaster.

And she did.

All to protect Shadow Gale.

An agreement made with Clamberry.

"I want the both of us to survive," said Pfle.

"What will you give me in return?" asked Clamberry.

"I'll make this the most interesting test you'll ever have".

And she did.

Clamberry enjoyed watching Pfle manipulate the other girls into killing and fighting one another.

Backstabbing, Deals, Alliances, all were in an attempt to protect the one person Pfle cared more than anyone else in the world.

Shadow Gale. Mamori.

At the end of it all, Pfle, covered in blood, approached Clamberry.

"Entertaining enough?" she asked.

"Hahaha, wonderful! An amazing show! 98 girls… All played like puppets. You have strength. I'd even consider fighting you," said Clamberry with a grin.

"I would lose. This is not the kind of strength you seek."

"Hmm?"

“You want to fight a strong, worthy opponent. My strength is in the mind. You seek physical strength, Clamberry. This is not the fight you would want.”

“Hmm… Perhaps. One day, I’ll find the one Magical Girl that will reignite that spark.”

“…When you do, I hope she kills you.”

Clamberry grinned.

The agreement was made. The deal was honored.

Pfle and Shadow Gale were allowed to survive.

When Pfle told this to Shadow Gale, both were happy. Pfle smiled, they hugged each other, they were happy.

Shadow Gale didn’t know about the deal.

She didn’t have to know.

She doesn’t have to know anything.

But she found out.

Then her memory was altered.

But now… she remembered.

Masked Wonder was killed.

Cherna Mouse too.

Detick Bell as well.

Murders.

The killings have started again. The killings… just like before.

How many Magical Girls did Kanoe manipulate and kill to protect Mamori? How many Magical Girls did Kanoe backstab? She couldn’t remember the details.

Mamori remembered Kanoe's words.

'*If there's one person I wouldn't lie to, it's you, Mamori*'.

But that in itself was a lie.

Kanoe never told her about those 98 Magical Girls she played like a chessmaster.

She made them kill each other.

Kanoe was ruthless.

Mamori had always known she would do anything to protect Kanoe and vice versa, but she never thought Kanoe would go as far as to manipulate and backstab… and murder… others to do it.

Was Kanoe the killer?

Masked Wonder died first, the only one who would know who it is was Kanoe. She had her wheelchair, she could travel that far.

Then Cherna. Kanoe checked her terminal last…

...What about Detick Bell?

Was Kanoe the killer.

She had doubts. She always did. She had doubts when Kanoe wanted to fight Cherna. She had doubts when Kanoe wanted to separate teams.

She assumed Kanoe had a plan… but...

What if Mamori wrong about Kanoe all this time.

Kanoe was not in her room anymore. Mamori was alone.

Mamori dumped her face into the pillow.

For the first time in her life, Mamori was crying.

Master's Side
Part 9

The Forest Musician Clamberry.

When she was a young Magical Girl, she was part of a selection test that went wrong.

One of the Magical Girls had summoned a demon, a monster of some kind, the details were vague, but…

…Something happened in that test.

Most of the Magical Girls were killed horribly.

Clamberry survived. Not only did she survive, she also killed the monster.

A sort of post-traumatic disorder happened in her.

She was addicted to bloodshed. Fighting until her bones would break, or her enemies.

Then, she was approached by one of the mascots, Fav.

Fav was a defective mascot. He cared more about interesting things rather than proper Magical Girls.

Together, Clamberry and Fav rose to the ranks until Clamberry became a certified administrator for selection tests.

That's when Clamberry began.

She had done many many trials before. All in an attempt to find the one all-powerful Magical Girl.

Clamberry longed to find the one opponent who would reignite her fighting spirit.

So far, almost every survivor would prove to not be what Clamberry was looking for. Not to mention, she couldn't allow them to explain the details of the tests, so she had their memories erased.

Then came the test last year.

The year Clamberry was killed.

The test where Snow White came from.

The test that actually produced the ideal Magical Girl.

Snow White had the strength and abilities to become ruthless, but because her memories weren't altered, she remembered the loss of life.

She remembered how it felt to lose friends.
So she had judgement that no other survivor would have.

Like any terrorist or villain, there would be those who would think Clamberry was 'correct.'

Two Magical Girl administrators copied Clamberry's selection process.

In the course of one year, Snow White apprehended them both.

It earned Snow White the name of *Magical Girl Hunter*.

The girl in the room of monitors grinned.

Snow White was perfect.

But there needs to be more Magical Girls like her.

Magical Girls that understood the pain of loss and suffering, but also were ruthless enough to win.

A Magical Girl who won't hesitate to make the hard decisions, but still fights for justice.

These participants that she's selected in this game, they were all involved with Clamberry in some way or another.

In a way, you could say, they are her *children*.

But which one will make it out?

Whatever happens, the ones that survive… are truly ideal Magical Girls.

Chapter 10:
Pechika in Creature World

☆ Pechika

The weather never changed. It was cloudy, but Pechika knew it wouldn't rain. There was always going to be sunlight here.

This was the third… fourth login…? She couldn't even remember.

Ironic, because she remembered everything else about herself.

She's back in the Wasteland Area.

Waiting for her other teammates to arrive.

She squatted.

She stretched.

She squatted.

She stretched.

A workout is nice before doing anything too dangerous.

Her Magical Phone rang. It was a message from Pfle.

'*Pechika, this is Pfle. I'd like to meet up. I don't know where you usually start. Could you update me with your location?*'

Pechika also wanted to meet up. Not just with Pfle, but the rest of her group.

Clantail, Leonetta. She hadn't had a chance to talk a lot about when Miyokata died. So many things happened at once last time.

The argument that Leonetta had with Miyokata.

She also was curious about the others' memories, and what they remembered as well. Pechika wouldn't barge in of course, but if she was right, they might be the same as her.

She sent a reply to Pfle. In a few minutes, her Map application updated.

Clantail was approaching her. Soon, she heard hooves.

Clantail.

Pechika saw her approaching, and the both of them smiled at each other.

But then, Clantail's smile turned into an expression of alarm.

She brandished her weapon, and Pechika noticed that her eyes were staring behind Pechika.

"Pechika! Look out!"

Pechika turned around. Too late, she was slammed down to the ground, an arm holding her down.

She could see her assailant.

Floral decorations on her dress, the aroma of flowers and woodland. Elf ears.
Melville.

She felt Melville's harpoon's cold metal surface lightly touch the nape of her neck.

"Back." Said Melville. Not to Pechika, but to Clantail.

Clantail didn't move. She was furious, her spear at the ready.

"Melville? Let go of her!"

Melville's eyes were focused on Clantail, with pupils as fearsome as Pechika ever saw them.

"I sed… Back."

Clantail took short steps forward.

“Back! Or shi dies!”

There was some strange accent to Melville’s voice, but Pechika felt like she could understand it somewhat.

The harpoon was pressed harder on her neck. Not enough to cut yet.

“What do you want, Melville?” asked Clantail.

No answer.

“Why are you doing this?” she asked.

“Bekaus I remember *everything*. Clamberry… wus my mentor. Du you know wat it fiils like to lose a mentor?”

Clantail’s grip on her spear tightened.

Melville didn’t back down.

“Very well, Clantail. Since yu won’t back doun.”

Then, a sharp pain. Melville’s heel stepped hard on Pechika’s right index finger.

“AAAAAAUGH!”

Pechika screamed in pain. She could feel her fingerbones being crushed with Melville’s heel.

Clantail gasped. She still stood still.

Melville stepped again, this time on Pechika’s middle finger.

“STO-AAAAUGHHH!”

Clantail stepped back.

Tears formed in Pechika’s eyes.

“What the hell do you think you’re *doing*!?”

A voice from behind Melville. A familiar voice to Pechika.

Leonetta.

“No kwestyons. Thet was the deal,” said Melville, eyes still facing Clantail.

“We also agreed that it won’t be *her*,” said Leonetta.

Clantail’s expression was that of someone that had been betrayed.

“Leonetta… you…”

Leonetta walked in front of Pechika and Melville.

Pechika could see Leonetta’s right arm dangling weakly. It looked like Miyokata’s dragon broke it.

“Why?” asked Clantail.

Leonetta looked away.

“10 Million.”

“So it’s money? You killed people for money?”

“I didn’t kill anyone.”

“She *bought* your loyalty? Is that how it is?”

“You don’t know… my situation”

“It doesn’t matter. It’s not worth betrayal.”

“Clantail, I-”

“How long?”

Leonetta fell silent.

“Did you kill Masked Wonder? What about Cherna? Was @NyanNyan your kill too? Maybe you even planned to kill Miyokata”

“*Fuck you*! I didn’t- I wasn’t- No one was supposed to die. I… wouldn’t…”

“Look around you, Leonetta…”

Leonetta looked back at Pechika, on the ground, pinned by Melville, harpoon ready to slice her neck.

Leonetta smiled at Pechika.

“I’m sorry… for everything…”

Then she extended her claws. Pechika closed her eyes as Leonetta sliced down and…

Clang

…knocked the harpoon away from Melville

“Nda!?”

Melville’s reaction was fast, and she attempted to strike down Pechika, but Leonetta blocks the shot once more.

“You’re not laying a finger on Pechika.” said Leonetta in a low, threatening tone, with a voice full of fury.

☆ Nokko-Chan

Nokko-Chan was running.

Lazuline was with her as well.

Pfle, on Shadow Gale’s back, was with them too.

They spawned in the Demon’s Castle, but had to go back to the Wasteland Area to meet
up with Pechika and her team.

While piggybacking Shadow Gale, Pfle began speaking.

“It was obvious from the start, but I couldn’t see it because I couldn’t remember. Melville is our killer.”

“Wh-What? Wait, Melly??? That can’t be right!”

“She’s the only one that makes sense. Look at her outfit. The way she dresses, her personality, it’s exactly like Clamberry.”

Nokko-Chan gulped at the thought. Melville’s the killer?

“Of course, looks aren’t concrete evidence, so I had to confirm it. She had to have the ability to hide the Miracle Coin when we inspected the phones, and she had to have found a way to hide Cherna’s phone display too.”

“I thought we agreed it was the Master!” said Lazuline.

“That is a possibility, but Melville’s powers are capable of these things.”

“What powers? Camouflage? She can blend in to the environment, right?”

“No. Not exactly. She can change the color of objects. Including herself. That means she
could alter the display of the screen by changing pixel colors, too.”

Lazuline’s face was distorted with confusion.

“B-But why? Why kill Cherny!? They were good friends and were in the same group.”

“Perhaps she did it subconsciously. Clamberry was her mentor. Perhaps she had the desire to defeat the strongest, like Clamberry did.”

Lazuline breathed out a heavy sigh, trying to understand the situation.

They were still running across. They were almost there.

“You keep saying Clamberry this, Clamberry that. You never explained to me, *who* is Clamberry?”

Shadow Gale stopped.

Nokko-Chan as well.

Lazuline wasn’t expecting a stop.

Pfle's eyebrows were raised. She was confused.

Shadow Gale's face was stiff.

Lazuline was confused as well, for a different reason.

"Huh? What? Why are you all looking at me like that?"

Pfle spoke,

"Lazuline. You had your memories restored right?"

"Uh… sure? Not much to restore really, I don't think I forgot anything."

"Do you know who the Forest Musician Clamberry is?"

"No, that's why I'm *asking* you! Who is this girl and what's up with Mellsy?"

Nokko-Chan looked at Shadow Gale and Pfle. The two girls had no idea what to say or explain.

Lazuline put her hands on her waist.

"Nokko-Chan, do *you* know Clamberry?"

Nokko-Chan gasped slightly.

"Yes. Yes, I do."

How could she forget someone like Clamberry?

Forcing Magical Girls to kill each other in some sick survival game. That was an unforgettable experience, if the memory wipe wasn't a thing.

"Okay, since *I'm* apparently the only one who has no clue, you'll have to tell me about this Clamberry later. Right now, we should hurry up"

☆ Pechika

Pain.

Numbness.

Pechika looked at her right hand.

Fingers crushed. The bones were broken. Blood leaking out.

Pechika couldn’t move. The fear was back again. That fear was back again.

She heard clashing noises, clawing noises, breaking wood.

She couldn’t move.

She was afraid.

Leonetta was pushed towards the ground. Most of her wooden skin was cracked or broken.

She was finding it hard to breathe.

Melville picked her up by the neck.

Pechika could hear Leonetta struggle.

Pechika couldn’t move.

Snap!

Thump

Leonetta fell down again. Her eyes hollow. No expression.

She was gone.

Leonetta was dead. She died and Pechika couldn’t do anything about it.

Pechika was too scared to do anything.

Leonetta apparently had worked with Melville before, but…

…Leonetta had fought to save Pechika’s life.

She had complimented her food.

She had been nice to Pechika.

Yes, she argued with Miyokata but…

…Leonetta's face. The hollow looking face that Pechika had been seeing since the Library.

That wasn't the face of just sadness.

That was the face of guilt.

Leonetta had done horrible things in the past, and she felt guilty.

She wanted to make it up. To redeem herself.

So she gave her life to save Pechika.

And Pechika couldn't save her.

She could hear screaming. Yelling. Anger.

Clantail was fighting Melville.

Melville had tried to retreat, but Clantail gave chase.

Clantail crashed into Melville, and the two fought.

Spear vs. Bow.

Clantail was the strongest in Pechika's team. Leonetta and Miyokata were strong too, but Clantail…

…She defeated the Great Dragon, she was entrusted with the Dragon Killing knife, she was the one with the most resourcefulness.

Clantail, who always kept a calm demeanor, an aura of sophistication. This Clantail was now angry.

Angry and sad.

Clantail will win.

She *has* to win.

But why is Melville moving so fast? It's inhumanly impossible, even for a Magical Girl.

Then Pechika remembered Clamberry's movements. The way she fought. It was similar.

Clantail might lose.

Clantail might die.

She can't die.

Pechika saw Leonetta's corpse, broken and battered. She couldn't save Leonetta, but this time… Clantail won't die.

Pechika moved.

Her right hand was bursting with pain.

She tried to stand up, but couldn't support herself well enough. So she jumped, slid, and grabbed onto Melville's leg with her left hand. Gripping it tightly with the strength of a Magical Girl.

This caused Melville to stumble, and Clantail whacked her with the butt of her spear.

Her other leg kicked Clantail away.

Then Pechika felt a sharp pain in her left hand.

"GAAAAUGH!"

She screamed again. Then she saw what it was.

Pierced with a harpoon.

Her skin was ripped apart. Blood splurting. Her bones in her left hand were visible.

Then Melville violently removed the harpoon and kicked Pechika across the field.

Pechika stumbled and rolled across the ground. Both hands injured. She couldn't move. The pain was unbearable.

"Agh!"

She felt a foot press down the back of her neck.

"Don't muve!"

Melville was restraining her.

Her neck was in pain. Melville's foot was pressing down on it. If she applied just a little more force, Pechika's neck would snap.

Melville aimed her bow at Clantail.

Clantail didn’t move. Probably afraid that Pechika would die if she did.

Melville shot a harpoon at Clantail, and Clantail immediately materialized her Shield +10.

The harpoon clashed with shield.

Another.

Another.

Melville was relentless.

The harpoon couldn’t break through, but the vibrations and the impact of the harpoon began to weaken clantail’s grip on the shield.

Melville had such strength.

“Gk…W-Wait!”

Pechika struggled to let out a voice.

Melville loosened her foot on Pechika’s neck, but kept her pinned. Her eyes were still staring at Clantail, warning her not to move.

Pechika coughed out some air to breathe.

“C-Clamberry… Always fought fair. So fight Clantail fair and square. You’re not like Clamberry at all.”

Melville’s eyes were filled with surprise. She glanced at Pechika, then she began laughing.

Her laugh, that smile, that was Clamberry’s smile.

“I respect my muster, but I am not her. She died becauz she wanted a feir fight. I won’t meik the seim mistake.”

It didn’t work. It didn’t work.

Melville and Clamberry were the same, but yet they were different.

Pechika couldn’t move.

Pechika wanted to move.

The forest.

They had fought her, but they lost.

She was fast, skilled, strong. Both of them tried to fight her at the same time, but there was no hope.

Pechika and her friend… who was her name?

They had been defeated and are now on the run.

But they lost their way in the forest.

Where are they now?

Everything was a blur.

“Pechika, run!”

Her friend shouted towards Pechika as Clamberry rushed her, and slammed her against a tree trunk.

Pechika was shocked. For the first time ever, she was scared.

She was scared.

Clamberry slammed her friend, then kicked her halfway across the woods. Her friend’s body crashed into a rock, bloody and bruised.

She stood up. Why did she stand up? Just run.

Her friend tried to hit Clamberry, but Clamberry was too fast.

A choke, then a takedown, followed by beatings.

Clamberry punched and puched. She beat her down. She didn’t stop.

She didn’t stop until her friend was dead.

Pechika saw it all.

Pechika couldn’t move.

Pechika couldn’t save her friend. She just saw the battle happen, and she couldn’t move.

Clamberry glanced over at Pechika.

From Clamberry’s Magical Phone, a mascot character appeared.

Fav.

“Well, good news, Pon! Looks like *you* survived the tests!”

“I’m not going to fight you. You’re not as strong as your friend. It wouldn’t be worth it,” said Clamberry.

“You got lucky, Pon! Enjoy your new life! Don’t worry, you won’t remember any of this, so
you’ll be all good afterwards!”

Clamberry had spared her, Pechika was relieved.

But at the same time, Pechika was sad.

Tears flowed in her eyes.

After Clamberry left, she went over to the body of her friend.

Her friend’s face was swollen, bloody, and red.

Pechika hugged her. She cried.

This was her fault.

She couldn’t move.

She didn’t move.

Why?

Why didn’t she move?

She should have saved her.

She should’ve acted.

But she didn’t move.

So her best friend died.

She couldn’t even remember her name…

The scene replayed itself in Pechika’s head.

Clantail was going to tire herself out, and then she’ll die. Melville’s strong, she’s fast, and she’ll beat Clantail like this.

She’ll kill her.

Pechika couldn’t move.

But this time…

…This time she *wanted* to move.

She was scared, but she wanted to move.

Her hands, both of them were broken, bloody…

It doesn’t matter

She will die if she fights

And Clantail will die if I don’t

She was scared

Even so, I have to…

She couldn’t fight back

That’s a lie. I can help!

Her body had been broken

But my spirit is burning

She couldn’t move

I’ll push my body to its limits

Pechika was determined

This time, it won’t end like before

Pechika’s Magical Skill activated.

5 minutes of touching the ground. Her Magical Skill, ‘To turn anything into delicious cuisine’.

Suddenly, 10 meters in diameter around them, the ground transformed into vegetable soup.

Melville was dragged in, so was Pechika.

Pechika grabbed hold of Melville’s legs, using her forearms to grab it. She couldn’t use her fingers, so she had to improvise.

She dragged down Melville deep under the soup. The two of them continued plunging down.

Until, suddenly, the soup seemed to have created a waterfall downwards.

Pechika had transformed the entire ground below her into soup, and apparently there was an end.

Pechika and Melville fell into what seemed to be a cavern, landing on a lake.

This was familiar.

The Underground Lake, in the Underground Area.

It was underneath the Wasteland Area this whole time.

Pechika didn’t let go of Melville.

The two of them continued drowning further in the lake.

Melville’s face was strained, grasping for air. Air bubbles flew out of her.

She kicked Pechika’s face.

I won’t let go

She kicked it again

I’ll never let go

She kicked another time

You’ll have to force me

Melville struggled and struggled.

Finally, she raised her harpoon, and brought it down with a thrust.

Pain.

Numbness.

Then, red liquid mixed with the clear water.

☆ Shadow Gale

Shadow Gale was running.

Her body was moving, but her mind was set somewhere else.

According to Pfle, Melville was the killer. Which means Melville must be the traitor. Melville is the traitor. The evidence has to make sense.

Clamberry, the one Magical Girl that looks like an elf, with vines, flowers, and a green colored motif, was the one that organized the killings.

Thus, Melville, the one person who looks like Clamberry, would be the one to engineer the killings here.

Wait, that didn't make any sense.

But think about her powers. She would be the only one that could the crimes.

The power to change an object's color.

Camouflage. She could kill Masked Wonder unexpectedly, a hit from behind without knowing it.

Cherna. She could change the display of the monitor, tricking her and anyone that participated in the checking.

But then again…

Pfle knew where Masked Wonder was as well. She was her teammate.

Furthermore, Pfle was the last to check Cherna's Magical Phone. Shadow Gale knew this to be a fact. So she could also be the one tampering with it.

Shadow Gale didn't want to believe it.

Pfle can't be the killer.

Pfle can't be the traitor.

Pfle wouldn't go that far…

…would she?

"Mamori!"

She snapped back to reality. Mamori was running, but her mind was somewhere else.

She was still running, with Pfle on her back.

"Mamori, are you listening to me?"

“Huh?”

“I said that you left Nokko-Chan and Lazuline behind. I can’t see them anywhere.”

“What? Where did they go?”

“I don’t know. You ran pretty fast.”

Shadow Gale couldn’t help it. She was on autopilot. Her mind was occupied. She took a look at her surroundings to make sure she was in the right place.

The area looks to be correct. She’s in the Wasteland Area. She’s in the correct place.

Just around the corner should be Pechika. However, as Shadow Gale peeked around the corner, what she saw was… a strange sight.

At the center of the field was a sinkhole, some liquid on it, that smells like vegetable soup.

And a discarded human-sized doll.

Wait, no… that’s not a doll.

That’s Leonetta…

Shadow Gale rushed over to Leonetta, she kneeled down and examined her. Parts of her body were cracked, since she was made of wood.

Leonetta’s eyes seem sad and distraught, but there is no life in her body.

For some reason, Shadow Gale couldn’t help but shed some tears. She didn’t know her very well. She didn’t know anyone very well other than Pfle.

Maybe she should’ve gotten to know all of them more…

She slowly closed Leonetta’s eyes.

“There was a fight here. Based on the surroundings, it was probably Pechika”

Pfle didn’t even want to notice Leonetta’s dead body. How could she?

Why hadn't Shadow Gale noticed anything before she remembered? Sometimes Pfle can be selfish.

Sometimes she can be cold.

No, she was always cold, always selfish. Shadow Gale just cared for her a lot that she saw through her faults.

Maybe it was time to see from a different perspective…

"Mamori. Perhaps it's time we stop pretending. We should separate. It will be easier for the both of us"

Separation again?

Fine. Shadow Gale could use some alone time.

☆ Melville

Melville despised Pechika.

Melville hated her.

How dare she.

"*You're not like Clamberry*"

Melville laughed it off at that time, but those words hurt. Those words hurt a lot.

How dare she.

Nobody knew Clamberry, nobody cared about Clamberry. To others, she was just a monster that killed people.

But when your mentor, the person you care about, is killed, and people insult the very memory you live up to…

…How dare they.

Melville wanted to become like Clamberry. Melville looked up to Clamberry. Melville

adored Clamberry.

Clamberry was a powerful Magical Girl.

No, that's wrong.

Clamberry was *the most* powerful Magical Girl.

When Melville became a Magical Girl, she had designed herself to look like Clamberry. She wanted to become like her.

When she was chosen as a member of her test, she killed all in her way.

She even wanted to challenge Clamberry herself. It was an honor.

But Melville's powers were to change color. It was no match for Clamberry's.

Clamberry's powers were to control sound. Clamberry could easily hear Melville's heartbeat or footsteps.

Melville was nothing to Clamberry. Melville was no match for Clamberry.

And yet, Clamberry saw potential in Melville.

Clamberry took Melville in, and Melville trained with her. She trained to become like Clamberry.

And then something happened.

At some point in time, Clamberry was killed.

It's impossible. How did someone defeat Clamberry? *Who* killed Clamberry?

Finding out who it was angered Melville. It angered her so much. Because it wasn't even
a worthy opponent.

She had seen the reports of the killing games.

Clamberry was attacked by a group led by a Magical Girl known as Swim Swim.

Swim Swim was an interesting Magical Girl. Young, and apparently, she adored her

mentor as well.

Swim Swim adored her mentor, and wanted to become like her mentor. Melville and Swim Swim had a lot in common.

So was it Swim Swim that finally bested Clamberry? That would've been fate. Melville *may* have been able to accept it.

No.

It was a random Magical Girl named Tama, who barely did anything. She didn't kill anyone. She didn't fight. She spent most of the test following Swim Swim's orders, and to top it off, she was cowardly.

Someone like that killed Clamberry?

It's an impossibility. It's impossible.

So Melville has to make it right. She has to continue Clamberry's legacy. Find the strongest Magical Girls, and kill them.

Clamberry's gift to Melville is that her memories were never erased in the first place.

When Melville was invited to this game world, she saw the faces of many familiar people.

Some of these girls were like her.

Some of these girls had accepted Clamberry's ways.

And yet, some other girls were merely survivors of her test.

Akane. The Samurai. That one was a bother, for some reason she remembered part of her test.

The memory wipe must not have been strong enough.

She had to be eliminated.

But then, Masked Wonder came along, and kicked Cherna Mouse across the valley, when she was gigantic as well.

That is powerful.

Powerful.

So she must die.

And so she was killed. There can only be one strongest Magical Girl.

Cherna would also need to be killed. After all, she was also the strongest. But Melville couldn't beat her in hand-to-hand combat, not with Cherna's abilities. So Melville had to play it smart.

Changing the display on Cherna's phone. A simple trick for Melville.

Then, Akane fought with @NyanNyan.

@NyanNyan killed Akane, which meant @NyanNyan was the strongest. Which means she was next.

But Genopsycho was an unfortunate victim.

Perhaps there is also a way to kill @NyanNyan… with a little help.

An offer. Money. Leonetta. Melville knew of Leonetta. She knew of Leonetta's real life problems.

And so Leonetta accepted the money, and manipulated Genopsycho's body.

After all, a dead body is the same as a puppet.

And @NyanNyan was killed.

The next victim wasn't strong, but necessary. Detick Bell wasn't on her list, but she was going to give everyone their memory back.

Melville thought she stopped her, but somehow she didn't.

Now everyone remembers Clamberry.

Next on her list was supposed to be Lapis Lazuline.

She was powerful and strong, and fought similar to Clamberry.

However, she had a slight detour. Better to kill two birds with one stone. Pechika was defenseless. Or so she thought.

How did she end up in this situation?

But now she had to redirect her tracks.

She had stabbed Pechika with a harpoon, and is now free. She became invisible, and slowly walked over to the surface of the Underground Lake.

Then, she heard a splash.

Clantail had jumped down. Her body was that of an eel.

She swam towards Pechika, and took Pechika to shore. Clantail took out her Magical Phone, and took out a Healing Potion.

Pechika's eyes opened.

They were both smiling.

Now's Melville's chance. She's invisible. She had her harpoon. No matter what happens,
Clantail will die.

She carefully took aim. No one could hear her.

She had trained with Clamberry. All sound would be dead. Clamberry taught her how to be as silent as possible.

All it takes is one throw. No one could hear her.

A forceful impact. If Clantail dies, Pechika will die too.

Silently, she threw the harpoon towards Clantail.

☆ Pechika

Pechika's eyes awoken.

“Pechika… you’re okay!”

Clantail hugged Pechika. She was crying, and probably for the first time, she was smiling
happily.

Pechika hugged her back. She had regained some of her strength.

Her stomach was stained red, but there was no pain or blood.

Then, Pechika… heard something.

She had a familiar feeling, a familiar smell, but she didn’t know what it was. The wind just
seemed… off.

She smelled metal, coming in fast.

Whoosh

There was no time to react. There was only instinct.

Pechika moved.

She turned Clantail around, switching places with her.

And then…

Pain,

Numbness,

Fear.

Pechika had been stabbed.

But for the first time, Pechika did something she thought she couldn’t do.

She had moved, and saved a friend.

She was satisfied, and, while hugging Clantail and embracing her, she closed her eyes

and smiled.

Leonetta, Miyokata, her little brother, Ninomiya-Kun, the friend she couldn't save, and… most importantly, Clantail.

Clantail, she should live a happy life.

It was fun while it lasted.

Pechika was satisfied and glad to make all of these friends.

It was fun while it lasted.

Pechika was happy.

☆ Melville

Again, Pechika had caused problems. Melville had missed her target.

But how would Pechika even know where Melville is?

She couldn't have heard it. Melville had trained to dampen her sound with the one and only Clamberry, whose power was to manipulate sound in the first place.

So what did Pechika do to find out about the harpoon.

…Of course.

Melville was foolish.

Pechika was a cook.

Her sense of smell was heightened. Because as a human, she must've already had a better sense of smell than most people.

Foolish.

Unprepared.

Clantail should have died now.

But instead, she hit Pechika instead. Nevertheless, it's not like Clantail would be able to figure out Melville's position.

Clantail was holding Pechika in her arms. She looked like she was crying.

Because of Pechika's magic, there was a large hole in the ceiling of the caves. Melville wished she was fighting in the Wasteland Area. Plenty more open space. But she can't exactly fly, and everyone is here.

It'll have to do.

One target. One kill.

Melville began to raise her harpoon again.

"Who did this?"

Melville heard a voice. Clantail was talking to someone.

Lapis Lazuline.

Lapis Lazuline?

"…Melville"

"…So Melly *is* the traitor. She killed Bellsie too?"

Lazuline's face was full of anger. There was no sign of the innocent blue Magical Girl that Melville saw before.

Lazuline's face turned away from Clantail and… turned towards Melville?

Wait, what?

She can't possibly see her can she?

Melville had killed all her sound. She had trained with Clamberry, the manipulator of sound itself.

Then Lazuline disappeared, and in a spark of blue flash, she appeared only a few

centimeters away in front of Melville.

“Melville. I asked you a question. Did you kill all those people?”

Melville was shocked. She retreated a few steps back. In a panic, she threw her harpoon
straight to Lazuline.

Lazuline calmly caught it in mid-air. She then grabbed it with both arms and broke it.

“No point fighting. You can’t beat me, Melly.”

What is this?

Lazuline crushed one of her gems, and threw the pieces towards Melville.

Lazuline sprinted towards Melville, and rapidly, she began unleashing a series of punches and kicks.

Melville tried to defend herself.

A punch to the stomach, a punch to the face, an elbow to the chest, a knee to the ribs.

Why?

How?

Melville grabbed another harpoon, and managed to slash Lazuline’s right leg, but Lazuline responded by stepping on Melville’s foot, and then unleashing a kick to her shin.

Not even a sound of pain.

2 seconds have passed.

Melville threw a punch, but Lazuline disappeared into thin air.

Where did she-

Crack

Melville’s back was kicked. Bones were breaking.

Everytime Melville made a counterattack, Lazuline disappeared and reappeared nearby, and immediately delivered a pummeling beatdown to Melville.

It's the gems…

...They surrounded Melville.

Lazuline was teleporting everywhere, blinking in an instant, never in one place at once.

This strength feels like fighting Clamberry.

A strike to the ribs.

A blow to the kidney.

Blood was couging out.

A punch to the neck.

Lazuline had hit all her punches.

3 seconds have passed.

Melville fell to the ground. She couldn't handle the beating. If she wanted to beat Lazuline, she had to focus.

Lazuline kicked her across the area.

Then she teleported.

She lunged at Melville.

Now was her chance.

Quickly, Melville twirled around, harpoon at the ready, and…

…As Lazuline's body was brought towards Melville, the harpoon pierced Lazuline's chest.

Lazuline's face was still angry, but she lost her power.

Melville released the harpoon from her body.

Lazuline collapsed.

4 seconds have passed

"*Melvilleeeeeee!!!*"

Clantail's voice.

Her lower body had turned into a gigantic lizard with red scales, and wings.

Wait, this isn't just any animal.

This is a *Great Dragon*.

Melville aimed her harpoon at Clantail's head as Clantail began to swoop down.

But then, Melville felt something grab her ankle.

She looked down.

It was Lazuline, breathing her last few breaths, angrily holding Melville down.

Melville lost her balance, and then…

Slash

Her body was torn in half.

It was over for her.

She had lost.

Blood splattered all over the ground.

Melville was dead…

…

…

…But the game was not over.

☆ Shadow Gale

Shadow Gale's back felt light. Pfle was no longer on her.

Where did Lazuline go? Where did Nokko-Chan go?

Shadow Gale opened up her Map app. Nokko-Chan's icon was in a building nearby.

Perhaps they could meet up.

Shadow Gale entered the building. It was empty.

Icons in the Map only show Magical Phones, not actual Magical Girl locations, so it might
be a trap.

Then, Shadow Gale noticed a familiar smell.

A burning smell.

She followed the smell, wrench in her hand.

That's when she saw a crisp black corpse. Unidentifiable by her facial features. She was
burnt. Very burnt.

On her hand, however, was Nokko-Chan's Magical Phone.

Shadow Gale instinctively closed her eyes at the sight of the body.

But…

Where's Nokko-Chan?

What's going on?

Master's Side

The automatic door opened to reveal a white Magical Girl standing on the other side.

“Come in, come in, Snow White!”

A Magical Phone activated, and Fal appeared.

“Snow White!”

“Shut up!”

Snap

The Magical Phone’s power turned off.

“Have a seat, Snow White.”

The Magical Girl known as Snow White took a seat at the table.

Snap

Coffee appeared on both ends.

Snow White looked straight at the girl with the glasses.

“Your name is Keek.”

“So you’ve done your homework, well done! I’m flattered.”

“You took girls who were involved with Clamberry’s tests”

“Yes, I did, Snow White. Now you understand why they must be properly trained to be ideal Magical Girls. Their tests were tainted.”

“And you call *this* game untainted? There’s death involved.”

“There’s always death in the real world. It’s a Magical Girl’s job to prevent it from happening in the first place. You could say I designed the perfect test.”

“No, you just copied Clamberry’s and put on a new paint job.”

“Why don’t we stop talking in circles and get to the point? Why are you here? Have you come to negotiate? The game’s almost over. Soon, either the Demon Lord or the players will win.”

Snow White stood up.

“I didn’t come to offer peace terms.”

“So different from before, Snow White… Did you know, that in order to get these girls in the game, I had to collect data about them. Their personal lives, their memories? To make another analogy, their copy in the game is a perfect copy of them in real life! Then their memories transfer to each other!”

“What’s your point?”

“My point is, Snow White… I’m not a bad person. I want to make the ideal Magical Girl. Someone like you. In fact, I want to see everyone be happy and alive!”

Keek smiled.

“Death is such an overrated thing. It’s sad to see your loved ones go away, right?”

Snow White’s face was still hardened. She had no idea what Keek’s trying to do.

“Snow…”

A familiar voice.

It can’t be.

He’s dead.

Snow White turned around.

The figure of a girl, silver hair, horns, a sword in sheath, yellow eyes, dragon tail.

La Pucelle.

“Sou-Chan?”

“Snow White”

Another voice. Higher, younger. Next to La Pucelle.

A girl in black hair, a black dress, pale skin, bags under her eyes.

Hardgore Alice.

Keek smiled from behind her.

“I can give them back to you. It’s possible in my world. They’ll be no different from when they were in the real world. It’s the same thing. La Pucelle, Hardgore Alice. They shouldn’t have to die.”

Snow White looked over at Keek.

Her mind was reeling from seeing those two. Those two again.

It brought back too many painful memories.

Keek continued,

“So, what will it be, Snow White?”

Chapter 11:
The Ones We Leave Behind

☆ Shadow Gale

Shadow Gale had redesigned her stun gun. A more powerful version of it. She had no idea how stun guns worked, but it’s not like it matters for someone with her powers.

A text from Pfle.

‘*Gather at the Demon’s Castle. Hurry.’*

Before she left the area, she looked again at the corpse.

Burnt. Just like before in the Underground Area.

Holding Nokko-Chan’s Magical Phone.

Is Nokko-Chan dead?

But there are no dragons in the Wasteland Area, unless… someone used the modified flamethrower that Shadow Gale had during the Demon's Castle area.

Shadow Gale had an uncomfortable thought. She had to confirm it.

When she got out, she saw Clantail climbing from the hole formed at the ground.

Her body was a gecko, and in both her shoulders, she was carrying Pechika and Lazuline.

Shadow Gale waited for her to pass, and dived into the hole.

Soon, she arrived at the Demon's Castle, where Pfle, with her magic carpet, was waiting for her.

"Mamori, it looks like Melville has died, according to our party status. Lazuline as well."

"I saw Clantail carry Lazuline and Pechika upwards."

"But there is a problem. The game isn't over."

"Which means the Demon Lord is still alive."

Pfle closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

"My lady, I need to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"Who has the flamethrower that I modified?"

"I do, Mamori."

…

"Is something wrong?"

"Nothing."

…

Pfle nodded, and turned on her Magical Phone. Fal was summoned.

“Fal, I need to know something about the game.”

“I’ll… try, Pon. My lips are semi-sealed.”

“This game’s participants… are they recreating Clamberry’s tests?”

“No, Pon. The game master has taken former participants of Clamberry’s tests and put them in this game, Pon.”

“But Lapis Lazuline doesn’t know Clamberry”

“Ha? But her memory should be restored, Pon!”

“She told us she doesn’t know her.”

“…”

Fal lost all expression, and was genuinely confused.

Then he distorted a bit, and went back to normal.

“…A message from the Master, Pon. It appears she made a mistake. Lapis Lazuline was not supposed to be here. Her predecessor was, Pon.”

“Her predecessor?”

“According to the Master, she was trained by Clamberry as well, Pon.”

So the Master made a mistake.

She *can* make mistakes. Which means she doesn’t know everything, which means there might be a way out.

“I’m sorry, Pon. But the Master has declared an emergency event meeting at the Town Square. There are only a few people left, and she’s hoping for a victory soon, Pon. Prepare yourself…”

Fal disappeared.

Pfle looked at Shadow Gale.

“Mamori, did you find Nokko-Chan?”

“I found a phone with a charred body holding it.”

Pfle looked at Shadow Gale for a bit, then she closed her eyes and shook her head.

“Then she’s gone.”

“Who burned her, my lady?”

“I do not know, Mamori”

…

Pfle sighed,

“Then we only have Pechika and Clantail as our suspects.”

“No, Pechika’s gone. Clantail carried her along with Lazuline.”

“That narrows it down a lot, Mamori.”

…

…

…

“Yes it does, my lady.”

The world became white, and suddenly they were transported into the Wasteland Town.

Standing in the square were 3 people.

Clantail.

Shadow Gale.

Pfle.

Clantail approached them. Her body was a horse.

“Why isn’t the game over?” she asked.

“Because the traitor is still alive,” said Pfle.

“I killed Melville”

“Melville isn’t the traitor”

“But she killed everyone, she tried to kill me… she killed Pechika and Lazuline.”

“The traitor isn’t necessarily the killer,” answered Pfle calmly. Sitting in her magical flying carpet.

“Where’s Nokko-Chan?” asked Clantail.

“Burnt. I found her dead,” said Shadow Gale.

“*You* found her? Alone?” asked Clantail.

“I didn’t kill her.”

Pfle looked straight at Clantail.

“There are no more suspects. Process of elimination makes you the only culprit, Clantail.”

“Me? I’m not the Demon Lord! Why not her!?” asked Clantail, pointing at Shadow Gale.

Pfle shook her head, “Shadow Gale has been with me from the beginning and protected me. She cannot be the Demon Lord. I’m an easy target.”

Clantail blinked twice. Then she laughed.

“I can’t believe this… you two really think *I’m* the traitor? What the hell kind of logic is that? Where’s the proof!?”

“We don’t have any, like I said, process of elimination.”

Clantail stomped her hooves on the ground.

She took out her spear.

“So you two are going to kill me, huh? What about Nokko-Chan’s body? Burnt, right? Who has that flamethrower?”

…

…

…

“I was not in the wasteland area,” answered Pfle.

Clantail’s face was full of anger.

“I am *not* dying today. Not after what I’ve been through.”

“Mamori, take left!”

Instantly, Pfle flew towards the right. Shadow Gale took out her wrench and ran left. Pincer attack.

Clantail’s lower body transformed into a tiger. She took out her Great Dragon shield.

Shadow Gale swung her wrench, but Clantail deflected it with her shield. The power of that shield was strong, and it threw Shadow Gale’s wrench away. Off-balance.

“Mamori! Stun Gun!”

Shadow Gale threw the stun gun at Pfle. Pfle thrusted for Clantail, but the shield again blocked it.

Shadow Gale saw her chance. She tackled Clantail and took hold of her spear.

Moving in, Shadow Gale attempted to thrust the spear, but Clantail’s body transformed into a snake, and she dodges it easily.

She wrapped herself around Shadow Gale, tightening her grip.

Pfle took out her flamethrower, and sprayed towards Clantail.

Clantail released her grip and took cover behind the shield. The shield was good, but some flames still got through and slightly burnt Clantail's skin.

Clantail then transformed into a giraffe body, becoming tall in the process.

Shadow Gale thought fast.

"My lady! I need the stun gun!"

Pfle nodded and passed it back to her. Shadow Gale combined it with another random object she got before.

The rope.

Rope + Stun Gun, remodeled, improved, an electric net.

The strength of the stun gun. It'll activate as soon as it wraps itself around its victim. The power of the stun gun, upgraded by Shadow Gale, was that it can knock out a Magical Girl in one shock.

Shadow Gale threw the net towards Clantail, as Pfle flew around her, distracting Clantail with her flamethrower.

The net wrapped itself around Clantail, and electricity began flowing from it.

"Nggh!"

Clantail grunted in pain as she transformed into a horse once again, falling down to her knees.

But she was still conscious.

What?

How?

Then Shadow Gale saw her necklace.

Earth Amulet. Back in the Underground Area. It's ability is to reduce the power of electric-based attacks in half.

Clantail endured the pain, unwrapped the net, and threw it towards Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale was still surprised. This was unexpected. Had to dodge.

She had to dodge.

Too late.

The net wrapped itself around Shadow Gale.

Then, a surge of electricity. Burning pain in the skin. Bones burning. Muscles are contracting.

Every single pain sensor in Shadow Gale's body was being activated at once. She had no control of her body.

"AAAAAAAUUGH!!! GGYAAAAAHHA!?!"

3 seconds, and the pain stopped, and the world fell into darkness.

For a split second, Shadow Gale could hear Pfle shout her name.

"*Mamori*!!!"

Clamberry's test was brutal.

They had to survive. They had to survive at all costs. Only one could survive. At least, that's what Shadow Gale thought.

She'll never forget that moment when Pfle walked over to her.

Her dress was bloody. Her face was bloody as well. But Pfle was smiling.

"Mamori… you're safe."

With tears, Pfle ran over to her and hugged her.

Shadow Gale was taken by surprise. Not by the hug, but by all this blood on Pfle.

"My lady… what happened? Were you attacked?"

“It’s okay… Everything’s going to be okay… We’ll be okay, Mamori”

“My lady, what did you do? I thought only one could go out?”

“No, it’s fine. It’s fine. I found a way.”

“What are you talking about?”

Pfle didn’t answer.

Shadow Gale raised her eyebrows.

“What did you do?”

“It doesn’t matter anymore…”

And then she forgot everything. Her mind was blank, but Shadow Gale had known what happened in her mind.

Pfle, the master of manipulation, had manipulated 98 girls into killing each other.

Pfle made a deal with Clamberry.

She had made a deal with the devil to save Shadow Gale’s life, at the cost of Pfle’s own innocence.

Pfle would kill to protect Shadow Gale.

She would kill to do make sure Shadow Gale stays alive

Shadow Gale opened her eyes. She was on the ground. Her arms and body were hot, and there were burn marks all over her arms.

Her head was woozy, but she could still see the battle before her.

Clantail’s lower body had turned into an alligator.

She had rode on top of Pfle’s flying carpet and crashed it. Then, with a swoop of her tail, sent Pfle tumbling away on the streets.

Clantail transformed back into a horse, took out her spear, and charged towards Pfle.

Clantail's face was that of someone that was betrayed.

"What did you do?"

"It doesn't matter"

Not someone that was found out as a traitor.

"Process of elimination points to you"

"What!?"

Clantail charged at Pfle, spear ready, but…

…Pfle stood up.

She had never stood up in the game before. Shadow Gale knows she can walk, but no one else did.

Clantail stopped, mostly out of shock.

"You can stand…?"

Pfle's eyes were burning in anger.

"Yes, and for hurting Mamori, you won't be able to stand."

In a split second, Pfle leaped forward and delivered a swift kick to Clantail. Clantail retaliated with a spear thrust, but Pfle used the momentum of Clantail's attack to dodge it.

She grabbed the spear and stole it out of Clantail. She smacked Clantail with the butt of the spear, and twirled it to point it towards Clantail.

Clantail is innocent.

Pfle thrusted the spear, Clantail blocked it with her shield.

Pfle planted the spear on the ground, launching herself upwards. She landed on Clantail's horse body, grabbed her in a chokehold, and kicked the shield away.

Clantail is not the traitor.

Clantail transformed into a crocodile, and twirled away. Pfle let go of her grip.

Clantail tried to rush Pfle, turning her lower body into a leopard, but as she tried to punch Pfle, Pfle grabbed hold of her fist, and broke 3 of Clantail's fingers.

Pfle summoned the flamethrower. Clantail noticed, bolted backwards, and barely escaped the inferno.

Kanoe… Stop…

Clantail raced for the shield, grabbed it, and stood her ground.

The flames were getting bigger as Pfle slowly walked towards Clantail, her face furious with rage.

Don't kill her

This was just like before.

Pfle acted weak, but she wouldn't hesitate to kill in order to protect someone.

A dark feeling formed in Shadow Gale's mind.

I have to stop her.

Clantail is innocent.

I have to stop Kanoe.

She found the strength to stand up.

Clantail's body had turned into a jellyfish, whose body was made of water, in order to reduce the burning of the flames.

Shadow Gale summoned her wrench.

I have to stop Kanoe.

Kanoe is the traitor.

Kanoe is the traitor all this time.

A straight line to Pfle.

Shadow Gale ran as fast as she can, wrench in her hand, and as soon as she reached Pfle…

…She swung the wrench hard at Pfle's head.

Wham!

Pfle was launched towards a building, bounced off, and rolled and tumbled down the street.

Shadow Gale's anger turned to elation.

I saved someone.

I stopped the traitor.

She approached Pfle, she had to see Pfle's face, her reaction, to see if Pfle really was the traitor.

Pfle's left hand was twitching. She was on her back, her body sprawled on the ground.

Then, Pfle stopped moving.

Pfle stopped moving.

Shadow Gale looked at her sprawled body, all bloody.

Pfle isn't moving.

Dead?

Shadow Gale's feelings turned hollow.

Even more, the game wasn't over.

The game didn't end.

Pfle was not the traitor.

"…No ….I couldn't have… That"

Shadow Gale began mumbling. Trying to understand why she did what she did.

I killed Pfle.

Pfle isn't moving.

I'm a murderer.

Shadow Gale promised to protect Pfle.

She was innocent.

Shadow Gale promised to always be by her side.

What have I done?

She grew up with her

She was all I had

Shadow Gale and Pfle had been through so much

Why did I ever doubt her?

Mamori's name meant protection

I killed Kanoe…

Mamori was supposed to protect Kanoe.

Kanoe…

Kanoe…

Shadow Gale fell to her knees.

"Kanoe… I… didn't mean to… Kanoe"

Tears began flowing down Shadow Gale's face.

"Kanoe… wake up… please wake up… I'm sorry… I didn't mean to… I'm sorry"

Then, Shadow Gale was grabbed by the neck.

Clantail.

She slammed Shadow Gale towards a wall, with a spear ready by her neck.

Shadow Gale dropped her wrench.

All the power on Shadow Gale was lost.

Clantail looked at Shadow Gale.

"You… Are you the traitor?"

Shadow Gale wanted to deny it, but she couldn't.

Tears just kept flowing.

Why did I do it?

Clantail might be the traitor, who knows at this point?

Kanoe is gone, and Shadow Gale couldn't live her life knowing she was the one that killed her.

"Pechika and Lazuline saved my life. I'm not dying today. If you *are* the traitor. You're going to die."

Shadow Gale was afraid and sad.

But she let out a small voice as she cried.

"…Just do it… Kill me…"

Clantail was slightly taken aback. Her spear was still pointed at Shadow Gale's throat.

But then.

"…Stop."

Pfle's voice.

"…I've heard enough. None of you are… ngh… the traitor."

Shadow Gale gasped and smiled.

Clantail released her grip on Shadow Gale.

Shadow Gale immediately ran over to Pfle, and she hugged her. Shadow Gale hugged Pfle and never wanted to let go. She hugged her tightly.

Clantail looked around her and regained her thoughts. She put her spear away.

Pfle hugged Shadow Gale back. Pfle's nose was bleeding, her face was as well.

Shadow Gale didn't stop crying, but she was smiling, and she dumped her face on Pfle's shoulder.

"Kanoe… I'm so sorry! I'm sorry… I thought I lost you… *sniff*… I don't know what got over me, I…"

Shadow Gale cried on Pfle's shoulder. Pfle patted her back, and Pfle smiled.

“Kanoe, I don’t want you to go…”

“It’s okay, Mamori. I’m sorry for doing that to you… I had to make sure you weren’t both the traitor.”

Clantail was confused.

“Wha… What? Then *who*?”

Pfle looked towards Clantail.

“She was smart. She hid it all from us. Since the very beginning. Mamori was acting strange. Doubting me more than usual, and I was even suspecting her of being the traitor.”

Pfle continued talking while calming down Shadow Gale.

“But when Mamori hit me across the head, I was knocked back into reality, per se… I realized that a lot of things seemed off and unnatural. Everyone began suspecting each other since our first meeting in the town square.”

Clantail widened her eyes.

“Wait, what are you saying?”

“I’m saying the traitor is none of us. She’s still alive. Someone who’s been manipulating our emotions this whole time.”

Clantail realized what Pfle’s talking about.

“…But she’s not here.”

“Is she? I suggest we have a look.”

Shadow Gale recovered from her bout of crying. Her face is red.

Pfle wiped some tears off of Shadow Gale’s face, and she smiled. Shadow Gale never felt so relieved in her life.

The three Magical Girls looked around the square.

Then, Shadow Gale noticed something in the fountain. Cracks. Small cracks.

Curious, Shadow Gale punched through the cracks. A hole underneath the fountain, and hiding underneath.

A maid Magical Girl.

☆ Nokko-Chan

This game.

This game is hell for Nokko-Chan.

I mean, how do you react to a game that tells you that you're a traitor and are supposed to kill everyone else to win?

Nokko-Chan wasn't someone who liked to murder people.

Why did the game pick her for that?

This game has been a hellish nightmare ride.

It looked like if Nokko-Chan died, then the other girls would be able to all return and survive.

For a second, just for a bit, Nokko-Chan considered suicide.

But then she would remember her mother. She couldn't do that to her.

So Nokko-Chan had to survive, or else her mother won't survive. Her survival was reliant on her mother.

She had to find a way to get everyone, but she also didn't want to kill anyone.

Conflicting goals. The best she could do… was indirectly kill them.

Sowing the seeds of discord, the emotional manipulator.

Pechika, normally a confident outgoing Magical Girl, was turned scared and frightened of her own abilities.

Detick Bell was made to suspect Lazuline as a traitor. Sowing the feelings of paranoia towards Detick Bell and Lazuline.

Melville had a feeling of hidden vengeance. All it took was lighting a spark, and Nokko-Chan fanned the flame.

Leonetta and Miyokata would often times get on each other's bad side, so she just had to increase their feelings of distrust towards each other.

When Cherna died, all feelings of paranoia were increased towards Pfle, the one with the most control.

But also, Shadow Gale had a sense of loyalty to Pfle. Nokko-Chan simply sowed the seeds of doubt in Shadow Gale's mind, and caused her to feel paranoid and distrustful towards Pfle.

As Nokko-Chan grew in power, she increased her effects.

No one suspected Nokko-Chan, because she always had calm feelings happen when they talk to her.

Pfle was smart, but she never suspected Nokko-Chan, because of the calm feeling she gave her.

Melville never targeted Nokko-Chan for the same reasons.

At the end, everyone's feelings had taken over them.

Melville was obsessed with vengeance.

Shadow Gale constantly tried to justify that Pfle was the traitor, no matter the evidence.

Pechika was convinced of her own fear, even though she conquered it.

And then, at the end, seeding the rage inside of Clantail, the 3 Magical Girls fought.

When Shadow Gale was hurt, Pfle was truly angry, and Nokko-Chan pushed her even more off the edge.

But also, Shadow Gale's paranoia and doubt had taken over her mind, so much so that she almost killed Pfle.

…But Nokko-Chan didn’t want all this.

She wanted @NyanNyan to be happy.

She wanted her team to be happy.

Pechika was a nice girl, she wanted her to be happy too.

Shadow Gale and Pfle shouldn’t have their relationship nearly torn to shreds.

Leonetta and Miyokata were loyal to each other, even if they fought.

She didn’t want to kill.

But she had to kill.

Two conflicting goals.

And now she remembers why she was chosen.

In a way, it wasn’t exactly her fault, but she was considered Clamberry’s assistant, and therefore given the title of Demon Lord. Traitor.

It all started with Nokko-Chan’s director.

The person giving Nokko-Chan money for jobs that Nokko-Chan would do.

Her director was a sympathizer of Clamberry. She would tell her the names of Magical Girls and ask Nokko-Chan to manipulate their emotions.

Make some angry, make some sad, make some happy.

She always got money for it.

Eventually, Nokko-Chan realized that this was to accelerate a killing game, and Nokko-Chan was uncomfortable with it.

She can’t confess either, or she’ll be taken away by the Land of Magic.

Guilt by association.

Then Nokko-Chan's mother would be gone, no money to support her health care.

So Nokko-Chan had no choice.

She had to save her mother.

She had dug out @NyanNyan's corpse, placed her Magical Phone on her hand, placed her somewhere far away, ran towards the town, hid inside the fountain.

Waited.

Waited.

When she sensed the presence of others in town, she began.

First, distrust.

Then, anger.

Then, hatred.

Finally, despair. Sadness. All negative emotions.

Suicidal emotions.

But that had failed. And now she was in this situation.

The three Magical Girls were staring down at Nokko-Chan.

A sense of victory was on them.

Shadow Gale, Clantail, Pfle, all smiled.

There was still a chance to save Nokko-Chan's mother.

Nokko-Chan grabbed the shovel, leaped outside, stood away, and gripped it tightly.

The other girls prepared for a fight, but then…

“If you’re going to kill me, I won’t resist. I deserve it, after everything I’ve done. But I want to make a deal with you.”

Her feet were trembling.

Nokko-Chan was scared.

But she will save her mother, no matter what happens.

Master's Side
Final Part

"Game's over, Snow White. Looks like they killed the Demon Lord. So, what do you say? I told you these girls would kill to win"

Snow White stood up.

She spoke,

"Alright, Keek. Let's talk."

"Ohoho, Snow White, finally willing to negotiate, hmm?"

"Tell me what I'm going to be negotiating with first."

"We'll repeat this selection process again, with *all* of Clamberry's children. The killers, the survivors, we'll mold them into ideal Magical Girls!"

"So why wasn't I chosen?"

"Because you're *different*, Snow White. You didn't kill anybody. You defeated Clamberry."

"I never fought Clamberry"

"Exactly… by not killing anyone *and* surviving, you've proven yourself to be the ideal Magical Girl. Even Ripple killed two people."

"So what happens to the killers that survive your game."

"Unforgivable. Killers shouldn't be allowed to live. That's their crime, taking a life, so that's their punishment."
Snow White nodded.

"So you believe that all of Clamberry's children are guilty."

"Of course! They have Clamberry's mark on them. Their mental state has changed."

“Tell me, Keek. What’s the name of your mentor?”

“A respectable Magical Girl, who always stood for justice!”

“And her name…?”

Keek raised her index finger. For 30 seconds, she stared at the table.

“Huh…? I can’t… remember?”

Why couldn’t Keek remember.

What was her name?

Keek loved her mentor. She adored her. A Magical Girl out to fight for justice. She taught Keek everything.

So why…

Snow White pulled out a file. On the file were the words ‘Keek’ on them.

“That’s your file. Land of Magic. Certified.”

“…What?”

“I couldn’t read your mind, so I assumed something was wrong. You think you turned off my powers, but you turned off the wrong one.”

“What do you mean?”

“You thought my powers were simply to listen to people’s minds *only* when they’re in distress? I’ve grown, Keek. I can pinpoint any distressful feelings you have *and* read those thoughts as well.”

Flame Flamey. Snow White is right.

But still, what’s this file.

Keek opened it and read it.

Snow White continued talking.

“Your mentor’s name was Pythie Frederica. She’s a sympathizer of Clamberry. She passed on her teachings to you. Why do you think your idea of the perfect test is one where they all kill each other? Your logic is flawed, Keek. Your world is fake.”

“I… no…”

No, it can’t be.

But Keek hated Clamberry.

But her mentor.

Snow White glared at Keek.

“You lied to yourself. You’re just like those children you speak of. You’re not god, Keek, *you’re* the Demon Lord of your own world.”

Keek fell off her chair.

Her glasses shattered.

The walls and floors distorted.

Snow White picked up Keek’s Magical Phone.

“You said so yourself. Children of Clamberry. Unforgivable. Right, Keek?”

Keek backed away from Snow White.

Keek was afraid.

Afraid of herself.

Of who she really is.

Snow White turned on the Magical Phone.

“Fal?”

“Snow White…?”

“I hope you don’t mind this, but since your former master is… occupied. I’m taking you

with me.”

Fal’s eyes widened.

“Yes! Yes, Pon! Yes! I promise I’ll be a good mascot to you, Pon!”

Snow White smiled, nodded, and turned off the Magical Phone.

Then, she turned her back, eyes never changing, and walked out the door.

Keek’s world shattered.

Keek went into a fetal position.

She screamed.

The world became black as void. The doors and monitors disappeared.

Keek’s world was a lie.

She had become the monster she wanted to be rid of.

Keek screamed, and she would never stop.

Epilogue

Kanoe and Mamori were sitting in a coffee shop outside the hospital.

This was a nice hospital. They were waiting for someone.

A middle school girl, with pigtails and glasses, shorter than they were, entered the shop. She looked around confused.

Kanoe stood up and approached her.

“Clantail?”

The pigtailed girl looked towards her and was surprised.

“I’m Pfle. That’s Shadow Gale. My real name is Kanoe, and her name is Mamori.”

The pigtailed girl smiled.

She looked at Mamori, and Mamori smiled back at her.

She then spoke,

“My name is Nene Ono. Call me Nene. Nice to finally meet you two in real life.”

Nene sat around the table with them.

“You’re younger than you look,” said Mamori with a chuckle.

Nene blushed at those words. “Well, yeah… surprised huh?”

“You know a lot about animals” asked Kanoe.

“Thanks. I want to be a zoologist when I grow up. Hopefully I can,” said Nene with a smile.

She took out some Tupperware from her bag.

“I brought food for you two. A little something I cooked. I started practicing a few days ago, so if it’s bad… sorry”

Mamori smiled at her, and took the food. She ate it, so did Kanoe.

“This is good, Nene. Really good.”

Nene blushed a bit.

“Thanks… it was her favorite. She’d cook it for our team whenever we took breaks.”

Mamori saw Nene looking a bit down.

Mamori grabbed Nene’s hand.

“It’s okay. You can let it out.”

Nene shed some tears, remembering Pechika.

Mamori understood that feeling. Losing the one person you cared about. Mamori had let her feelings be clouded in the game.

Now, Mamori wanted to be better. Mamori wanted to change.

“Nokko-Chan’s hospital bills were paid,” said Kanoe.

“Her mother’s in good hands,” said Nene, sniffling.

“How are we going to tell her?” asked Mamori.

Kanoe closed her eyes.

“We have to.”

Mamori remembered the last few moments of that game.

Nokko-Chan had been manipulating their minds. She’d been found out.

The 3 Magical Girls were angry, distraught, full of despair.

Clantail was about to charge, Shadow Gale was going to kill Nokko-Chan for what she almost made her do to Pfle, Pfle was also ready to end it here.

But then, a warm feeling of calm washed over Shadow Gale.

This was Nokko-Chan's doing, but…

…but it was calming.

It was nice, happy, a good feeling.

The three Magical Girls didn't move.

Nokko-Chan stood trembling with her shovel.

"Hear me out, before you do anything, hear me out," said Nokko-Chan.

She took a deep breath.

"I deserve… to die. But no one else did, none of the other girls, and… and my mother deserves to live as well…"

Mother?

"If I… If I do what I'll do next, then you'll all share the money reward. I'm just asking you to share it… with everyone's family. Please. I caused all this, and I don't want their family to suffer…"

Nokko-Chan never wanted to kill anyone.

She never directly killed anyone.

The traitor role was forced into her.

"It doesn't excuse what I did… to all of you. But… But, at least I know, if you accept my deal, then their families will be at peace…"

The 3 Magical Girls looked at each other.

They looked sad. Not from Nokko-Chan's manipulation, but genuinely sad.

Pfle nodded slowly.

Nokko-Chan chuckled. A small chuckle.

“…Thank you. I’m sorry… for breaking relationships, for tearing rifts… I’m sorry for everything.”

Nokko-Chan pointed the shovel at her throat.

“…But none of you will be killers today.”

Shadow Gale wanted to sprint towards Nokko-Chan, but the feeling of happiness and pleasure stopped her again.

“Goodbye, I wish we could’ve met under different circumstances,” said Nokko-Chan as she smiled.

Then she rammed the shovel into her neck.

The game world turned white.

The game…

…was over.

“Did you two hear about the game master?” asked Nene.

Mamori choked on her coffee.

Kanoe nodded.

“Land of Magic sent someone to deal with her,” said Kanoe

“What? Did it work?” asked Mamori

“Yes, we don’t know what happened, but the game master never showed up again.”

“How?”

“I’m not sure, Mamori. Perhaps one day we’ll know the details. For now, it’s time to visit them. I’ve got the flowers.”

The three nodded. They stood up, and left the coffee shop.

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12 graves.

One for each Magical Girl.

The three girls stood in front of it. They couldn't recover the real bodies, but this is their memory of them.

Flowers on every single one.

They had already passed the money into their families.

Now they mourn.

"…It's lonely."

"It is."

"What do we do now?" asked Nene.

Mamori looked at Nene, then at Kanoe.

"We move on. We move on for them, we change for the better," she said as she smiled.

Kanoe chuckled.

"Well said."

Yes.

It's time to change for the better. Become a better person.

Masked Wonder was a hero of justice, Mamori wished she talked to her more.

Pechika, Mamori never got to know her a lot.

So many things that Mamori wished she had done if she weren't so stubborn before.

Now, both as Mamori and as Shadow Gale, it was time for a new beginning.

For everyone’s sake. For the ones they left behind…